

## Here's to a Healthy Start in the **New Year!**



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**As the new year begins,** I once again find myself thinking healthy thoughts—not just about food, but about all aspects of my life. After months of indulging in candy, cookies, cakes, and rich foods, I've started to reflect on why we tend to overeat during the Christmas holidays. It often comes down to a mix of social, psychological, and cultural factors.

One of the main reasons we overindulge is the abundance of food and alcohol. Despite rising food prices, we still tend to cook far too much. The variety and sheer volume of food makes it easy to overeat.

Cultural traditions also encourage us to deviate from our normal eating habits. Each year, I eagerly await my mom's homemade fudge, mint brownies, chocolate pound cake, and peanut brittle—foods I wouldn't dream of eating any other time of year.

Then there's social pressure. Family gatherings revolve around sharing food as a way of bonding. It's easy to feel encouraged to eat more, especially when loved ones insist, "Just one more bite!" I've been fooled by Aunt Ellen's watermelon rind pickles too many times. A good rule: if you don't know and love it, just say no.

For me, emotional eating is the biggest culprit. Holidays can trigger nostalgia, happiness, or even stress, and eating becomes my way of celebrating or coping. This year's election added another layer of emotional tension across the United States, amplifying the urge to seek comfort through food.

Finally, disrupted routines around mealtimes are where the trouble often begins.

This month, I'm sharing a few tips to help you start the new year in a healthy way.



### Important Tips to Start the New Year Right:

**Reflect on the previous year.** What worked? What didn't? Use these insights to embrace a healthier lifestyle moving forward.

**Set realistic goals for yourself.** Make them Smart, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

**Focus on nutrition.** Shift to whole, nutrient-dense foods. Incorporate plenty of fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins into your diet. Getting enough protein is crucial at every stage of life.

**Establish an attainable exercise routine.** Find what works for you—whether it's Pilates, walking, dancing, or something else you enjoy. I suggest trying to do at least 30 squats a day—we're big fans of that one!

**Stay hydrated and rested.** Aim for 7–9 hours of sleep each night and drink plenty of water throughout the day. One of my goals this year is to give up Diet Coke. Set a goal that's achievable for you.

**Above all, be kind to yourself.** This is the most important step. Progress takes time, and treating yourself with compassion will make all the difference.

Here's to a fresh, healthy start in the new year!

I am once again sharing some great choices as you eat out in Amarillo.

**El Tejavan** is now at three locations. My favorite, healthy things to order here are: *Caldo De Res with homemade broth*. It is delicious with one of their homemade corn tortillas. Very healthy. I also love the *Green Chicken Enchiladas*. You can substitute a small salad for the rice and beans if you are really watching your diet.

**Crush Wine Bar**, downtown Amarillo. The *wine mussels* are a real protein hit. They are also low in calories. Pass on the grilled baguette. Try the *cilantro jalapeño hummus* served with fresh veggies. The *house salad with grilled salmon* is a hit as well.

**Cellar 55**. The *Tuna tower* is delicious. Eat it as a meal without the fried wontons. Full of protein. *Ahi tuna salad*. Delicious fresh tuna with a balsamic vinaigrette.

**Overeze** (Amarillo's newest breakfast restaurant.) *Drag me through the garden omelet*, a delicious garden-fresh omelet. *Brunch veggie pie*, and the *egg white omelet*.

**El Bracero**. I will say, not along the healthy line but these are the best hamburgers in town. *The Mexican burger* has a fried egg on it! But on to healthy. They have several choices. The *fish tacos* are delicious and healthy. The *veggie plate* is really good. The *grilled quail and lamb chops* are my favorite things ever!

**Scott's Oyster Bar**. Yes, you can eat a very healthy and delicious meal at Scott's. I love their *Shrimp Creole* which they serve as their Thursday special. It is the best. The *boiled spicy or regular shrimp* are great as well.

**Eat Right**. The *salad bar* is great. Always fresh and delicious. Also, my very favorite is the *Turkey avocado sandwich* - sans the cheese!

**Shelby's at Tradewinds airport**. We love the *turkey sandwich* on the delicious homemade bread. That is all I ever order but John assures me the *salads* are great as well.

**Sushi House**. *Becky's special*. It is not on the menu but all you have to do is ask for it. Tuna and crab served in a bibb lettuce cup. *Kani Su roll* - the most ordered roll at the restaurant. They now have two locations. One in Wolflin and one in Town Square. Both are delicious.

**Sai Indian Food**. A new Indian food restaurant in the old Brent's store. They serve a great *whole chicken* cooked in the tandoori oven. YUM!

**OHMS**. One of our other favorites is OHMS. Every night they have an amazing *fish special*. We always get that as one of our choices. I always order the *Elk tenderloin*. Speaking of protein, rich and low in calories - always a winner.

I hope you will try some of these choices as you navigate your new year and the new you.



## Recipes to make at home.

Soup is a very filling and delicious choice for a healthy lifestyle. I make this soup either as a cauliflower soup or asparagus. I will print the cauliflower recipe but you can easily substitute asparagus as an option.

### **CREAMY CAULIFLOWER SOUP**

- |                           |                               |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 head cauliflower        | Salt and pepper to taste      |
| 2 T. olive oil            | 2 T. Mexican Crema or ½-and-½ |
| 1 small onion, small dice | - low-fat works great         |
| 2 cloves garlic, minced   | Garnish with Parmesan cheese  |
| 6 C. chicken stock        | and cayenne pepper to taste.  |

Remove the cauliflower from the core. Coarsely chop.

Heat the olive oil in a soup pot over medium heat and add the onion and garlic. Cook until softened but not browned.

Add the cauliflower or asparagus and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer until the cauliflower is very soft.

Remove from the heat, add the Crema and salt and pepper to taste. Using a hand-held immersion blender puree the soup in the pot until smooth. Be careful.

Top with Parmesan and cayenne (optional.)

## **TUNA SALAD SANDWICH**

Here is a quick mid week recipe. Long ago were the days of the mayonnaise laden tuna salad. Growing up we had the delicious mayonnaise salad on white bread and fried it on the griddle in butter! Yum, those were the days.

<p>6 ounces of oil packed tuna -drain off the oil. 2 T. fresh basil 1 stalk celery, minced 1 finely chopped scallion, green and white parts</p>	<p>3 T. fresh lemon juice 1 T. mayonnaise Salt and pepper to taste</p>
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Mix all ingredients together and place on whole wheat toast that has been spread with fresh hummus.

## **BEST-EVER HUMMUS**

<p>1 can (15 ounces) chickpeas, rinsed and drained - You can use 1 ½ C. fresh cooked chickpeas if you prefer ¼ tsp. baking soda 2 fresh lemons, juiced (at least 1/4 C.) more if desired, I usually use 2 1/2 medium size lemons 1 large clove garlic, chop in pieces 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt, to taste</p>	<p>1/2 C. tahini (That is sesame paste) located by the peanut butter in the grocery - you must stir the Tahini before using it. 2 to 4 T. ice water, more if needed to reach the consistency you like 1/4 tsp. ground cumin 1 T. good olive oil Garnishes to add: Chopped Kalamata Olives, olive oil, paprika</p>
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Place rinsed and drained chickpeas to the side.

In the bowl of your food processor combine lemon juice, garlic and salt. Process until garlic is finely chopped.

Add the tahini to the food processor and blend until the mixture is thick and creamy. Remove the lid, with a spatula and scrape down the sides of the processor.

While running the food processor, drizzle in 2 T. of ice water. Scrape down the food processor, and blend until the mixture is ultra smooth, pale and creamy. Scrape down the sides and continue.

Add the chickpeas, cumin, soda, and olive oil. process until smooth. While processing this mixture slowly add the desired amount of ice water to reach the consistency that you prefer.

Taste and adjust the flavor by adding more salt or lemon juice.

Scrape the hummus into a flat bowl and swirl a pattern on top. You can fill the indentation with olive oil and chopped kalamata olives. Sprinkle with Paprika.

## **DELICIOUS AVOCADO SALAD**

<p><b>Dressing:</b> 1/4 C. extra virgin olive oil Juice of 1 lemon ¼ tsp. ground cumin</p>	<p>1 tsp. Dijon mustard 1 tsp. honey Salt and pepper to taste</p>
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Mix well and store in the fridge.

<p>2 avocados, cubed 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved 2 C. rotisserie chicken, breast meat cubed, or any left-over meat or shrimp</p>	<p>½ small cucumber, sliced in half moons ½ C. corn, cut from the cob - raw 1 jalapeño, minced 3 T. fresh chopped cilantro</p>
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Add all the above ingredients in a bowl and toss with the dressing. It is delicious! *AWW*



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