

Eat It

Judie Davis

1968

Sorry about not making the last issue. Your Eat It girl was in the hospital, which gives her a good reason to rap on institutional feeding and freedom.

The curfew was on the week before I went into the hospital, which seemed to prepare me for the confinement. I became a body which had to be operated on, something which had nothing to do with my mind. First my civil liberties, then my body!

ATTENTION URBAN PLANNERS: Please make patios and outside gardens a requirement in hospital complexes.

How can anyone hope to regain their health when they have no contact with fresh air and ground and trees and things—hell, with reality of any sort. My hospital stay drove home the fact of what a small minority we are. At least once a day someone would ask me if I was a hippie, as it seemed there was another girl with long hair and she was a hippie, etc. Trying to explain that I wasn't became useless. It's hard to be a revolutionary in a hospital. They all said I was ruining my eyes, reading so much.

The whole experience was a change, and in the end, it was good for me all around. The doctors and staff at Hutzel Hospital were very kind and helpful, as were all my wonderful friends. Thanks to everyone for helping me get myself together.

But now, down to the nitty gritty. The hospital food was lacking in love, to put it kindly. Even after I got my appetite back and almost looked forward to the meals, I just could not hack it. And I really wanted to like the food, as it doesn't take a food critic (the Eat It girl?) to put down hospital food. I'm sure it must have been the atmosphere. I firmly believe it isn't just good cooking that makes a meal memorable, but the total environment; the music, the wine, the friends, the table setting. Everything adds up to make cooking something more than a necessity. No matter how great the chicken is, if your guests aren't relaxed and enjoying themselves, it won't taste right. Roast beef and spinach in an atmosphere of white sheets and night gowns does not taste right.

Institutional feeding can best be described as heavy on the ADA (American Dietetics Association). Everything adds up in the right columns of nutrition, but does it really balance out? If dietitians and home economists are so right, why do most Americans eat so wrong? Something is wrong somewhere. Maybe ADA just needs Stan Freeburg to do their advertising.

If Americans could first come to understand bread, I suggest they try to rid themselves of this three meals a day bullshit. Who in the hell started it, anyway? Eating between meals makes you guilty and ruining your dinner is an American sin. The increasing population and total urbanization of the world will soon make eating breakfast, lunch and dinner impossible. (I gave up eating between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. when I started Wayne. Believe me, that's the best time to take classes.)

Restaurants are learning to specialize if they are to make a profit, offering the individual the chance to eat what he wants when he wants to. Like Egg Foo Young for breakfast.

ADA is also heavy on the American Dietitians act like food fascists. They have a way of stamping out ethnic cooking similar to our governments handling of ethnic minorities.

It could make sense to me, say, if in a Hamtramick hospital, the majority of who's patients came from Hamtramick, to have a good Polish cook in the kitchen who would cook good Polish soul food that would do wonders for getting Polish patients together.

On that note, a kielbasa recipe to help you get yourself together:

KIELBASA AND LENTILS

Cook 1 cup lentils in salted water about 20 minutes. Drain, but save liquid.

Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a casserole. Stir in 2 onions, 3 cloves garlic and cook until tender.

Mix in 1 medium can tomatoes, drained and chopped, and cook until almost all the liquid is absorbed.

Peel casing from 2 lbs. polish sausage. Cut into 1/2-inch slices and toss with tomato mixture. Add lentils, 1 teaspoon sugar, 1/2 teas. pepper, 1 bay leaf and salt to taste.

Stir in enough lentil liquid to moisten well and bake in a 350 degree oven for 30 minutes.

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