

Issue Date: Health & Beauty - May 30, 2008, Posted On: 5/30/2008

Treat Yourself

Healthy and delicious foods wait for you this summer

By Krista Nightengale

Story by Krista Nightengale
Photography by Chris McGathey

Think a salad's not a summer treat?

Walk into Salata in Preston Center, and you'll be greeted with an incredible line of fresh-cut, bite-sized tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots, broccoli, grapes, strawberries, mandarin oranges, walnuts, almonds, raisins, and dried cranberries, along with some lettuce, dressings, and Asian-barbecue chicken, spicy chipotle chicken, or seafood.

But those are just a few examples of the more than 50 items you'll find to put on top of your salad.

Still think it's not a treat? How about some yogurt then?

Not just any yogurt, OrangeCup yogurt, a frozen treat topped with your choice of strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, nuts, granola, dark chocolate chips, or even Fruity Pebbles cereal.

But these two items are more than just your run-of-the-mill treats. They're not only delicious, they're healthy.

The salad is an obvious health option, but as far as a treat, it's not often seen that way. Michael Mina, owner of Salata, believes he's helping change that perception.



OrangeCup yogurt comes in three flavors and the toppings range from raspberries to granola.



This salad is a perfect combination of shrimp, mandarin oranges, cranberries, strawberries, and nuts.

“When you’re eating it, there are so many different fresh ingredients,” he said. “People say it’s not like a salad. It’s good and filling and you have over 50 options to choose from.”

Mina said his clientele is made of approximately 55 percent women and 45 percent men. He’s heard stories from customers whose girlfriends made them go in. At first, they were skeptical. Then they tried it, and were believers that a salad really can be filling and delicious.

“We have pretty much every vegetable you can think of, every fruit, every cheese, every nut is on there,” Mina said. “And they’re unlimited.”

So if you want a few more grapes, go ahead and ask.

The dressing, which is generally the element that can turn a healthy salad into a splurge, is even not that bad for you at Salata. Created by a chef from the Culinary Institute of America, the ginger lime, herb vinaigrette, and even the ranch dressings have no additives or preservatives. And only a small batch is made each week to ensure freshness. Of course, just to be safe, you may need to ask for the dressing to be put on the side.

To follow up your healthy salad, you may want to head over to NorthPark Center and try the new treat, OrangeCup. With just 14 ounces of one of the three flavors of yogurt and some fruit toppings, you can get an extremely satisfying, healthy treat while only consuming a few more than 110 calories, depending on what you top it with.

Young Lee, the chief operating officer and marketing director of OrangeCup, said the company has been certified by the National Yogurt Association as having active live and active cultures, which means the treat has more than ten million pro-body cultures per gram.

“Frozen yogurt is not just good, but it’s healthy for you, it’s not just healthier,” he said. “It has a really good flavor that’s almost addictive, and you can enjoy it.”

Since opening in April, Lee said people can’t seem to get enough.

“It’s not really just a dessert, it’s a snack, and it’s a meal replacement,” he said. “People get it for breakfast with bananas and cereal as their toppings.”

Before launching their brand, the group met with Medical City Heart to pick the toppings. Everything is heart healthy. Just in case you started questioning the nutrition aspect of this treat, check the dish. It’ll have a label with a breakdown of calories, sugar content, and nutrients.

“It is what it is,” said Lee. “It’s frozen yogurt. We can put a label on it and the customers know this is what you’re eating, why it’s good for you. We can be proud of it, and the customers wanted to know that. So we put the labels on it.”

Owner Michael Mina hopes people will see salads as not only a healthy food, but also a treat.

Because of their concept of revitalizing people through their product, Lee said he believes this new

product is here to stay.

“If you want, this could be a lifestyle product,” he said. “We think this is going to be the next lifestyle brand like Starbucks or Jamba Juice.”

GET YOUR FIX

Salata

8307 Westchester
Dr.
(214) 363-6991

But you can't spend the whole summer eating just salads and yogurt, so if you're still looking for a worthy and healthy summer treat, make your own. That's what Marcia Miles does. With her cookbook, *Fabulous Foods, Fun Flavors*, Miles shows how to do healthy cooking without revamping your entire diet.

“The book is like a guide for people who would like to maintain their health and their weight without having to struggle,” she said. “Eating in a balanced way, they will be able to do that with the book.”

OrangeCup
NorthPark Mall
(214) 890-7710

In the beginning of the book, Miles offers advice on ways to skip the fat in a meal. For example, when cooking chicken or beef soup, let it cool before you eat it. When it's cooled, some of the fat will rise to the top allowing you to skim it off before consuming.

She also suggests small changes such as using natural or raw sugar rather than white sugar.

So whether you head to Preston Center to grab a salad, stay at home and cook, or go to NorthPark for some yogurt, make sure you take the time to enjoy the summer and all the treats it has to offer.