

Living with flavour

If you want to live long and be strong, 'living foods' are the way to go, writes LORI BOOTH.

WHAT to start the New Year with renewed health, bountiful energy and a continuous sense of wellbeing? The secret to living your best life is simply to eat more

"living foods" — raw, mineral-rich, natural, and to eat back on "dead foods" — foods that are exceptionally acidifying to the body, devoid of any nutritional goodness and which rob your immune system — foods that are highly denatured.

The old adage "you are what you eat" has never resonated more powerfully than it does in this express age of fast foods, convenience foods or foods that we eat without paying any attention to mindless food, I call it. Add to this the increasing incidence of cancers and other life-threatening diseases at ever earlier ages and we are faced with a choice: what would you rather resemble — a dirty polluted, traffic-congested city or a clean, fresh, green countryside? You can continue a diet clogged with "poisonous", acidic foods containing trans fats, refined sugar, white flour and be plagued by sickness, or you can eat mindfully — a diet consisting largely of raw foods, rich in minerals, nutrients and natural flavours — and enjoy a life bursting with health and vitality.

Two proponents of this healthy style of life are Peter and Brynn Daniel, whose company, Soaring Free Super Foods, runs health food stalls in and around Cape Town and who personally lead "Raw Foods, Living Foods, Elements of Health" programmes throughout South Africa, teaching people about raw food principles and showing them easy ways to prepare a multitude of delicious raw food meals. Their purpose is to demonstrate how you can mindfully go about transforming your health. That they are passionate about their work — and their way of life — is obvious; they both have lean, healthy bodies; clear, shining eyes; luminous complexions and glossy hair; and consistently high levels of energy and enthusiasm. Inspiration indeed, if any was needed.

Now if the thought of eating only cold salads and fruit and never enjoying another glass of wine for the rest of your life makes you want to stop reading more, allow me to explain a little further. Firstly, you don't need to give up your favourite cooked meals entirely, that would probably cause you more harm than good. Secondly, there is a whole library of raw food books out there filled with recipes that will make your mouth water, many of which can be found on the web. Thirdly, if you aim to apply the 60:40 rule of eating 60% alkalising foods (green, leafy vegetables and some fruits) and 40% acidic foods (avocados, nuts, seeds, some meat and fish), you will gain healthier control of your body. Ideally the 60:40 rule is your goal and follower of this "raw food style" have found that it is not difficult to achieve once you start to feel the benefits it brings, especially when you add vegetable juicing to the mix. Peter and Brynn are optimistic. The best results from a raw food diet are achieved when vegetable juice is included in your diet — preferably a litre per day. This is a cardio-busting, parasite-cleansing, immune-boosting, anti-gout/yeast-fighting, health-enhancing must! Green leaves are packed with minerals — calcium and magnesium; vitamins, antioxidants, and fibres — everything we need for optimal health and nutrition. The secret on vegetables: Pineapple and apple juice taste nice and sweet and have their benefits, but the veggies are where it's at if you want to live long and be smiling when you get there."

Peter starts off the Elements of Health workshop by giving a



crash course in physiology and nutrition. "Historically there has been an over emphasis on vitamins and an under emphasis on minerals and this imbalance needs redress. Each cell contains over 4,000 enzymes, which are only ever fully activated when the major minerals and trace minerals are present in sufficient quantity. The higher the concentration of minerals in a food, the better that food is for you and the better your body will function." He goes on to say that hunger is more than the stomach growling to be filled with just any food. "Hunger — simply put — is the body's search for minerals so it can activate enzymes and make the body function as optimally as possible. Eating mineral-deficient foods leaves the body wanting more, which causes it to over-eat as it searches for more minerals. It is virtually impossible to over-eat mineral-rich foods as the body will become satisfied sooner and finish eating naturally." By consuming a mineral enriched diet, the body will soon find its ideal weight.

According to scientific research, it is estimated that between

50% and 90% of nutrients in food are destroyed during the cooking process. It has also been found that cooking food alters protein into substances that disrupt cellular function and speed up the aging and disease processes, turn most good fats into carcinogenic bad fats and disrupt mineral absorption. Remember that only humans and some domesticated animals eat cooked and processed foods. Can food that loses its nutrients through heat or is treated with dyes, preservatives, flavourants and added hormones still contain adequate nourishment to keep our bodies performing at their best? The benefits of feeding our raw plant foods are countless from their ease of access and simplicity of form to their cleansing and regenerative properties and their abundance of nutrients and enzymes, nature presents us with all of these virtues and more.

Durban-based Barbara Leiman, who is 60 years old and has followed a vegetarian diet from an early age, has now converted to 80% raw food and says she feels unbelievably light and energetic — to the extent of swimming up to 1.5km every day.

"Each morning I concoct a litre of delicious fresh vegetable juice and drink it throughout the day. The raw vegetables I have re-established the presence of live enzymes in my body and this is particularly manifesting in my eyes. After a laser on about eight years ago caused them to become quite dry, they have now begun to produce tears, making them more comfortable and more comfortable."

Louise Harrison from Cowies Hill says that she is now eating an 80:20 raw:cooked food diet and loving it. She lost five kilograms in two months without ever trying and has never felt healthier or slept sounder.

Carol Echan from Alverstone says

"After three months of consuming morning vegetable juices and lunchtime fruit smoothies with a healthy cooked meal at dinner time, my family and my domestic worker, Lindi, have all noticed heightened energy levels and absence of hunger. Lindi has lost 10 kg and her long-term high blood pressure has now normalised. I have found I can't get food cravings any more and that my sense of taste and smell has improved. I definitely feel my hot flushes are minimising and hopefully that is because my hormones have balanced out."

Water and Brynn's two-day Elements of Health weekend course will be available in the following cities in 2008: Wilderness, Jeffrey's Bay, Gaborone, Darban and Johannesburg. (Visit www.superfoods.co.za for more info).