

# Life Balance INITIATIVE

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## A Word from Chef Michael Bauer...

While school is back in session and summer is over our local farmers are still going strong with wonderful local fruits, vegetables, herbs, and fresh baked goods. Stone fruits are in full swing with plums, peaches, nectarines, and apricots being the focus. Pears are plentiful along with Northern Michigan's biggest fall surplus, the apple, which includes the new super apple, the Sweet Tango! Hard squash is starting to make its appearance with some varieties being delicata, spaghetti, and my favorite, butternut. Root vegetables will be in full swing including beets, carrots, parsnips, and turnips. Varieties of potatoes are also making their statement for excellence. We also cannot forget allium cepa family or (Lily) with over 600 varieties world-wide with the most popular being onions, leeks, scallions, chives, ginger, and shallots.



Local products are more popular today due to interest in obtaining the freshest, most flavorful produce directly from the farmer when in season. Farmer's markets continue to rise in popularity over the years, with 18 % growth nationally over the last few years. Anyone vying for a parking spot on Saturdays Farmer's Market in downtown Traverse City will agree.

By supporting local produce and product in general, we keep money in our own community which in turn is then reinvested here at home. While supporting local farmers, we need to remember the support of local vendors in general. Unfortunately, four of our local restaurants decided to close their doors this last weekend. Let's support our fellow patrons!



I'm always writing about why we need to eat fruits and vegetables and to stay away from processed and genetically modified foods. Proper nutrition is one of the keys to good health and health aging. My newest reading comes from the book "The Water Secret" from Howard Murad, M.D. His emphasis is how vibrant health and anti-aging comes from the cellular level. Your skin cells make up everything in your body from your skin, brain, kidneys, heart, and connective tissue, and on and on.

He stresses as we age our bodies get bombarded with disease, free radicals, inflammation, and continual dehydration. This affects the ability to keep our cell membranes hydrated. When our cells become dehydrated we develop disease, wrinkles, and aging. This is defined by the water your body keeps in your cells, but not the water you drink.

**"Eat your Water!"** Dr. Murad states drinking water alone will not keep you hydrated in a cellular level. The most prevalent ingredient in fruits and vegetables is water! Colorful fruits and vegetables are concentrated with nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. This is why fruits and vegetables especially in their raw state are so important. Here is a breakdown of water levels for some differently consumed foods.

- \*Watermelon is 97 percent water.
- \*Tomatoes, cucumbers, and zucchini are 95 percent water.
- \*Salad greens are about 90 percent water.
- \*Carrots are 88 percent water.
- \*Beans and whole grains are 88 percent water.
- \*Chicken and salmon approximately 65 percent.
- \*Cheeses being dried come in at only 40 percent water composition.

Unfortunately, today's American diet consists of processed foods which are made up of sugar, salt, and fat. None of these three ingredients have water as an ingredient. Some will say our bodies need salt to stay alive. This is true, but we tend to overdue everything as a society and salt in excess can become toxic.

According to the USDA, most people get 70% of their calories from animal products (process foods) and junk food. Only 30% from plant- based foods. Animal products offer us important amino acids and protein, but unfortunately, do not contain fiber which is found in fruits, vegetables, nuts, grains, and seeds. Most adults should try to take in 30 to 35 grams per day. Unfortunately, the USDA states that only about 10% of Americans get more than 2 servings of fresh produce per day.

Okinawa is a chain of islands south of Japan. They have recently made worldwide news with their elderly population having, per capita, the most centenarians (100 year olds.) A typical Okinawan diet consists of the following:

- \* Seven servings of fruits and vegetables each day
- \* Seven servings of grains a day, such as brown rice and wheat noodles
- \* Two servings of soy per day
- \* Fish several times a week
- \* Minimal meat and dairy foods



Compared to the Okinawans, we eat and drink too much of the wrong types of foods. Most American diets lack antioxidant and nutrition. Try to get as much fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds into your diet daily; by doing this you will have “eaten your water”.

Remember that along with oxygen, water is one of the two main ingredients of life!

**Bon Appetit!**

*Chef Bauer*

### **Recipe for the Month**

#### **Sweet Potato- Apple Bisque**

Yield: 4 servings

- ½ cup- minced white onion
- ¼ cup- minced peeled carrot
- ½ Tablespoon- minced garlic
- 1 cup- peeled and chopped apple
- 2 cups- peeled and chopped sweet potato
- 2.5 cups- vegetable stock or water
- ½ cup- heavy cream
- 1/8 teaspoon - cayenne
- 1/8 teaspoon- cinnamon
- Salt and white pepper- to taste



In soup pot add 4 oz. olive oil  
 Add onions and sweat for 2 minutes  
 Add carrots and sweat for 2 minutes  
 Add garlic and sweat  
 Add sweet potato and apples- sweat 2 minutes

Cover with water or stock

Bring to a boil- reduce to simmer until sweat potatoes are tender (20 minutes)

Add heavy cream and simmer for 2 minutes

Puree in blender and adjust seasonings

**Enjoy!**