



**Thank You, Dr. Shapiro**  
*By Joe Stein, President*



During our exercise sessions, many of my clients discuss the books they are reading. They mention The Last Juror, The Da Vinci Code and The Amateur Marriage. When I fill them in on what I'm reading, they eye me quizzically. I guess The Clinical Exercise Specialist Manual, Exercising Through Your Pregnancy and Denise Austin's Hit The Spot: How To Target, Tone and Slim Your Problem Areas are not on many nightstands. Too bad, because my current read, Dr. Shapiro's Picture Perfect Weight Loss, offers a visual program for permanent weight loss.

If a picture is worth a thousand words, this book is worth a million calories. The comparisons on pages 130 and 131 are typical. Isn't a plain, unbuttered scone a healthy, low calorie breakfast? You decide: one scone contains 700 calories. The following mega breakfast also contains a combined total of 700 calories: An English muffin with jam, a small bowl of cherries, a bowl of corn flakes with banana, two slices of light toast with marmalade, a stem dish with sliced oranges and pineapples and a bowl of oatmeal with sliced peaches. This is the breakfast of three champions.

Dr. Shapiro asks that we listen to our bodies. Most diets fail because they involve deprivation. Through the use of pictures comparing food choices of similar calories but vastly differing portions, he empowers us to choose, not cheat, and decide not diet. Sometimes small portions won't do. Sometimes we eat for social or emotional reasons. Sometimes we must spend long hours with business associates or clients at a dinner table. Regardless of our situations, Dr. Shapiro empowers the reader to make better choices that involve real-world portions and eating situations. In many instances, you can eat a lot more food and consume fewer calories by making more informed decisions. As an example, two slices of cheese pizza contain 900 calories. If you *must have* pizza, choose one slice, plus one and one-half cups of minestrone soup, plus a salad with artichoke hearts and tomatoes for a total of 600 calories.

Dr. Shapiro examines the eating habits of four archetypical people: An office worker tied to a desk, a business traveler wined and dined every day, a stay at home mom with kids and a Police officer eating at odd times and on the run. The before and after analyses of their eating habits is eye opening as it mirrors our own eating.

Another chapter uncovers the dangers lurking in ostensibly healthy foods. For example, yogurt covered pretzels are healthy...right? Three pretzels contain 140 calories, the same as chocolate. Which has more calories, five ounces (a real-guy sized portion) of chocolate M&Ms or five ounces of yogurt-covered raisins? At 675 calories each, it's a draw. What about the tiny lemon square from Starbucks? At 420 calories, this food

choice contains more calories than three McDonald's pancakes and a tablespoon of syrup.

The entire section of the book called "Guilt-Free Dining Out" is both enlightening and encouraging. Being on a "diet" while dining out can turn one of life's pleasures into a complicated, calorie-counting, guilt-laden, salad-dressing-on-the-side, stressed-out affair. Dr. Shapiro provides insightful guidelines and shows how to read between the lines of a menu, including those of many well known restaurants. New York's Nobu, Union Square Café, Tavern on the Green, Elio's, Mezzogiorno and Nirvana are among those analyzed. As a fringe benefit, only you know what is behind your choices. Your dining companions can keep their expressions of pity, nods of encouragement and the advice of Aunt Betty from Boston to themselves; thank you very much.

As part of my research for a follow-up column, I feel compelled to try some of Dr. Shapiro's suggestions for Le Cirque 2000. While not typical dieter's fare, the following meal merits a research paper in thoughtful nutrition:

Appetizer: Cassolette of Baby Vegetables with Black Truffles

Salad: Mesclun

Main Course: Salmon, broiled with Crispy Fennel, Artichokes, Tomato Salad and lemon Vinaigrette

Classic Le Cirque Dessert: Assortment of Homemade Sorbets

To faithfully employ the scientific method, I would enjoy a glass of Sauvignon Blanc with my appetizer and salad, a Chardonnay with my meal and an espresso with dessert.

Research grants are now being gratefully accepted to fund this important study in haute cuisine. Fitness and lifestyle journalism is a difficult and dangerous profession. But someone has to do it.

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