

Healthy Soul Food:

Three-Day Cycle Menu

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Our healthy soul food restaurant strives to create a relaxed, home-style atmosphere for residents of the Southeast. Soul food, a traditional spread of “comfort foods” has always taken the form of unhealthy cuisine, rampant with high fat, high sugar, and high calorie choices. In part because of the lifestyle choices of this demographic, Southerners have high rates of obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and hypertension (“Rankings”). One way of combating this issue is by establishing restaurants that serve familiar cuisine with healthier options. Acceptability to the palate is essential for any menu planning, especially when hoping to help curb morbidity and to encourage lifestyle change for those who may not yet be contemplating their health status. Healthier options for familiar comfort foods are a step in the right direction on the continuum of lifestyle change.

Since our restaurant targets comparably high-morbidity individuals, we must consider these characteristics when menu planning and purchasing or sourcing our ingredients. For our menu, we limit our use of fats, and replace certain fats such as butter or margarine with healthier fats such as olive oil. We limit heavy meat consumption, and provide a varied menu featuring chicken, fish, whole grains, and fresh fruit and vegetables.

Our cooking methods are varied as well; instead of deep-fat frying foods, we stick to baking, steaming, sautéing, and broiling to prepare the foods and rely on spices and the natural flavors of foods to entice the consumer and to replace the overwhelmingly high fat, salt, and sugar flavors. By modifying recipes and decreasing portion sizes, our customers not only enjoy our recipes but they may also reduce their weight and the chronic diseases that accompany high body weight.

Our menu caters middle class populations, but we also acknowledge the serious and long standing poverty issues within communities. Due to our menu consisting of less preservatives (like

salt and sugar) and locally-sourced ingredients, our menu items will be slightly more expensive than traditional soul food restaurants. However, we have enrolled in a program with the USDA as a part of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) where qualifying individuals can use their benefits to purchase hot meals from our establishment, making healthier food accessible to more low-income populations (“Eligible Food Items”).

Going along with our homey, Southern theme, our menu style is simple and humble. We believe the food images in the menu along with the descriptions should be enough to entice to customer. This simple format also makes the information clear and easy to follow. Our plate orientation as well is simple; the dishes are put together in a visually pleasing way, with multiple color and texture variations. However, we use minimal garnish to maintain a simple soul food style.

Finally, our menu closely follows the USDA's daily guidelines to meet the nutritional needs of our customers. Each day of our menu provides adequate amounts of all the food groups. Each day we provide varied servings of 3-4 ounces of bread, cereal, rice, or pasta, 3 cups of vegetables, 2 cups of fruit, 3 cups of milk or milk substitutes daily, 6 ounces of protein, and 6 table spoons of a healthy fat such as olive oil or fish. Additionally, our desserts minimize granulated sugar and try to replace it with sugar from whole fruits, which contain fiber. However, if individuals are not eating here for each meal of the day we cannot account for the variety and balance of their outside meals.

Our restaurant aims to transform the mindset that soul food is unhealthy. Through modifications in the fat, salt, sugar, and meat content of our menu items, we offer more nutritious and well-balanced meals to the Southern population struggling with obesity and the resulting comorbidities. Hopefully our alternative style will gain popularity, sparking a slow transformation toward healthier communities.

TUESDAY

<u>Breakfast</u>	<u>Lunch</u>	<u>Dinner</u>
<p>Mixed Fruit Cup (apple, banana, honeydew, and grapes) OR 100% fruit juice (choice of Apple, Orange, or Cranberry)</p> <p>Cereal Creamy, lightly-sweetened grits with fresh berries OR Assorted dry cereal</p> <p>Entrée Gullah-seasoned Mushroom and Spinach Omelet</p> <p>Bread 100% Whole Grain Toast OR Cornbread</p> <p>Beverages Coffee, Tea, Low-fat Milk</p>	<p>Soup Chunky Vegetable Soup with carrots, summer squash, and green beans</p> <p>Entrées Turkey and Rice Collard Green Bundles with tomato-garlic sauce OR Cajun Shrimp with whole grain pasta</p> <p>Vegetable Roasted Golden and Red Beets with balsamic glaze OR Purple Apple Slaw</p> <p>Bread Whole grain roll</p> <p>Salads Salad Bar OR Broccoli Tahini Salad with almonds and sesame</p> <p>Desserts Raw Banana Pudding naturally sweetened with dates OR Key Lime Sorbet</p> <p>Beverages Coffee, Tea, Low-fat Milk</p>	<p>Appetizers Dill Dip with fresh veggies OR Hearty Tomato Soup with cannelloni beans</p> <p>Entrées Black-Eyed Pea Fritters in a spicy pepper sauce OR Onion and Garlic Oven-Fried Catfish</p> <p>Potato/Pasta/Grain Roasted New Red Potatoes OR Sweet Corn-on-the-Cob</p> <p>Vegetables Oven-Fried Okra OR Garlic Roasted Green Beans with shallots and hazlenuts</p> <p>Salads Salad Bar OR Citrus Kale with raisins and walnuts</p> <p>Desserts Mini Apple Pie: uses a small Macintosh apple as the pie shell OR Whole Wheat Ginger Cookies made with fresh ginger, served with dairy-free</p> <p>Beverages Coffee, Tea, Low-fat Milk</p>

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