

CUTTING-EDGE COOKWARE

KITCHENS | Get healthy with a germ-free space, great cookware and fresh foods

The heart of a healthy lifestyle is the kitchen, with an emphasis on fresh foods prepared in good cooking equipment, according to Dr. Andrew Weil, a cutting-edge pioneer in integrative medicine, and prominent American chefs like Rick Bayless, cookbook author and owner of Chicago's Frontera Grill and Topolobampo.

But how do Americans move toward a healthier lifestyle when many families don't even sit down together for a meal and when too many meals are fast foods or processed foods?

Chefs like Bayless are in the forefront of better nutrition, espousing fresh and organic foods from local farmers, and bringing out new lines of cookware designed to spark an interest in healthier eating.

Bayless teamed up with Chicago's Radius Product Development to launch a high-end kitchenware and serveware collection for Copco, Chicago. The 37-piece collection uses authentic materials—wood, cast iron, stainless steel and ceramics—for pieces including an avocado scoop, bean pot, cazuela and tortilla steamer.

"What I am all about is trying to help people learn simple ways to cook food that is from fresh, raw ingredients," said Bayless. "That's going to be the healthiest food you can get because it is not processed.

"And I do believe that a few really



NONTOXIC BACTERIA BUSTER. Cleaning up without chemicals is easy with BacterCloth, an environmentally friendly cloth that eliminates 99 percent of microbes by contact. Tested and approved at the Pasteur Institute and the University of Arizona, the cloth uses new Zeolite technology to prevent the growth and spread of salmonella, E-coli, mildew, Staphylococcus and Streptococcus. The BacterCloth, made from inorganic compounds, is chemical free and reusable. Available soon for \$5.99 at www.absolutelynew.com.

good pieces of cooking equipment make that task go smoother—but the rewards are also greater," he explained. "If you've got a thin little stainless steel pan, and you try to sauté something and get a beautiful brown crust, it's not going to happen.

It's just going to burn and the cleanup is hard. But if you have a heavy pan that will heat evenly, then you can sear that shrimp or that chicken breast and it will be ab-

SEE KITCHEN, PAGE 10

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

KITCHEN | 'We are in tremendous nutritional peril.'

solutely delicious."

Health and nutrition linked

Weil says the heart of a healthy lifestyle is the kitchen, with an emphasis on fresh foods prepared in good cooking equipment.

"We are in tremendous nutritional peril," Weil said to his audience at Chicago's recent housewares show. "It is not necessarily how much fat you eat, but the fact that our modern food system has transformed food. When we technically manipulate food, we reduce the nutritional quality and increase its dangerous qualities. Highly processed food has replaced healthy natural food in the American diet."

As founder and director of the University of Arizona's Program in Integrative Medicine, Weil is on a mission to educate health and medical professionals, as well as the general public, to the importance of good nutrition and lifestyle.

Nutrition is not taught at the nation's medical schools, Weil said, and it shows up in many ways, especially in the abysmal food served in U.S. hospitals and medical centers. "Over 40 percent of hospitals have fast food restaurants on their premises," he said.

Not only does this nutritional ignorance show up in the juvenile obesity epidemic, followed by Type II diabetes, but there are cardiovascular ramifications. "We are already seeing an increased incidence in men in their early 30s and 40s," said Weil, who also believes there is a strong nutritional component to diseases like cancer, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

"People tell me that they don't have time to cook, that they don't



MULTITASKING, MULTITIMER

Poaching salmon while keeping watch over the boiling tea leaves and simmering spinach? This new Quad-Timer uses four countdown timers arranged to look like a four-burner cooktop—so what's on the stove and what's being timed are intuitively linked. Basic and professional models retail for \$19.99 and \$29.99 respectively at www.americaninnovative.com and gourmet stores.

even sit down to one meal together," lamented Weil, who is also a clinical professor of medicine and professor of public health at the University of Arizona.

"We can make meals that are quick, delicious and healthy," he said, noting that the average Italian male at age 18 can make a basic tomato sauce.

Healthy food can be fun and doesn't necessarily mean giving up foods that we enjoy, he said. "You can always eat dark chocolate," he said, smiling, "because the cocoa butter is healthy—milk fat in milk chocolate is not—and high quality dark chocolate has antioxidants which are better than red wine and green tea."

Cookware for good health

Weil incorporated his beliefs into a new high-quality stainless

steel cookware and electrics line called The Healthy Kitchen, by Spring Switzerland. The cookware is a heavier 5-ply bonded stainless as opposed to the more traditional 3-ply, and incorporates specially formulated steel rolled edges to prevent food from interacting with the aluminum interior core as a response to concerns about aluminum's connection to Alzheimer's disease. The cookware does not use nonstick finishes.

Another line of cookware stressing healthy cooking is the Chantal Cookware Corporation. Chantal CEO Heida Thurlow was the first woman to launch and run a cookware company. She has introduced a Copper Fusion line using new technology which fuses copper into carbon steel as an alternative to nonstick cookware. The line responds to an En-

vironmental Protection Agency's advisory board conclusion that nonstick coatings release PFOA, a chemical labeled as "a likely human carcinogen."

In other areas of the kitchen, manufacturers are bringing out more environmentally conscious products as health-oriented consumers give the heave-ho to abrasive and toxic cleaners.

Improved eating patterns?

Consumer eating patterns show small signs of improvement, according to the 2007 Housewares TrendTracker report from Riedel Marketing Group, which tracks a group of 100 cutting-edge consumers, dubbed HIPsters, across the country.

Twenty-one percent of these HIPsters are sitting down to eat dinner as a family an average of 4.5 times a week—more often than a year ago. Many are eating at home more often, too, but for every one HIPster preparing food at home more often, there is one HIPster preparing food at home less frequently.

Not all of this food is being prepared from scratch. Some consumers are serving healthier convenience and prepared food from outlets like Trader Joe's, and others are checking out the new "meal assembly" centers.

"You walk into one of these places, assemble several meals from fresh and chopped ingredients and bring it home," explained Lisa Casey Weiss, lifestyle consultant to the International Home & Housewares Show. "The cooking is done for the first time in your home. It's convenient, but it's not fast food."

Not only food but also safer cookware, preparation practices and cleaning products contribute to a healthier kitchen. The products we show here are either available now or should be on retail shelves within a few months.

Researched by Pat Terry
for the Sun-Times



FOUR-WAY HEALTHY COOKING.

Chicago's Morningware Inc. introduces the Halogen Oven, whose four-way cooking process uses conduction, convection, infrared and Halogen energy. It's 50 percent faster than a conventional oven but can use 75 percent less energy. The Halogen Oven roasts, grills, bakes, toasts, BBQs, dehydrates and even fries, but that's not healthy. It retails for \$99.99 at www.morningware.com.



TEA TIME-R

Taylor Precision Products unveiled a unique Tea Thermometer/Timer that helps to brew seven types of tea to perfection. Add boiling water to a teapot or mug, select type of tea and place the thermometer inside the water. The timer beeps and flashes when the temperature is correct. Put the tea in the water and push the start button for countdown. The Tea Thermometer is expected in stores by July at \$24.99 (www.taylorusa.com).



FRESH OR SPOILED?

You can find out quickly with SensorfreshQ, a hand-held, battery-operated meter that uses a disposable cartridge (the QCard). In an easy 1-2-3-step operation, you can tell if it's safe to start dinner (a green light) or toss the spoiled food (red indicator light) and head for a restaurant. This new technology from Food Quality Sensor International accurately measures the bacteriological activity in fresh meat and poultry. Suggested retail price is \$89.95 at www.SensorfreshQ.com or www.sharperimage.com



FRESH FROM MEXICO

Frontera Grill's Rick Bayless created a 37-piece collection of preparation and serving pieces, called The Mexican Kitchen line. (Above) the ceramic tortilla steamer in deep red "salsa" hue, priced at \$29.99. (Right) the avocado scoop of stainless steel and cilantro-color silicone handle retailing at \$14.99.





MAKE FRESH CUSTOM YOGURT

Combine your choice of milk with active yogurt cultures and, in 12 hours, Yolife Yogurt Maker from Tribest, produces fresh yogurt. Included are seven 6-ounce glass jars to hold the 80 ounces of fresh yogurt you've made. Suggested retail \$29.99, available spring 2007 at www.tribest.com.