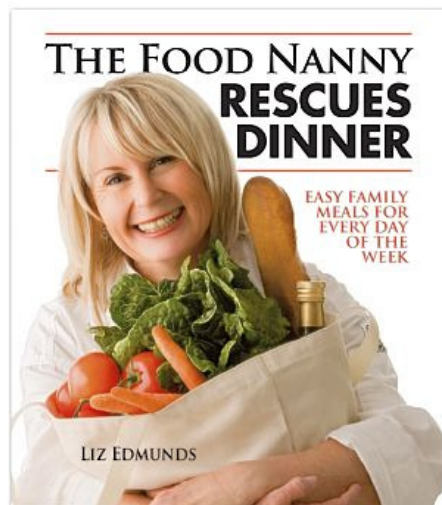


Boost your resolve with these ideas

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"The Food Nanny Rescues Dinner: Easy Family Meals for Every Day of the Week" by Liz Edmunds.

It'll soon be the New Year, and people will be working up the resolve to make New Year's resolutions of every type. Many of them no doubt will involve food and drink - what to eat less of, what to drink more of -- and many no doubt will be broken within a day or two of being made.

We asked foodies of various stripes if they would share resolutions, either their personal ones or ones that would be helpful, or at least entertaining, to others.

Here's what they said:

DR. JULIA B. GREER works in the Division of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. This year she published her first cookbook, "The Anti-Cancer Cookbook" (Sunrise River Press, \$19.95).

"I've talked with lots of my friends who tell me of the food 'ruts' that they get into (especially if they have finicky kids), and I recently read a study that said that the majority of people in the United States basically eat the same 15 foods and five beverages. And Pittsburghers, in general, don't think a dinner is a dinner unless it includes meat. So my resolution recommendation would be:

"One day per week, prepare a meatless dinner, from scratch. Include leafy greens, fresh vegetables, whole grains, soy or low-fat dairy products (think lentil stew, portobello mushroom tacos, whole wheat pasta with tomato and basil sauce for example). You can get the recipes from cookbooks, magazines, online sources or friends. Each week, try something new. Keep the dishes that you liked on file and discard the ones that you weren't crazy about and by next year, you will have a whole new repertoire of healthy dinner options to choose from."

ERIC WALLACE is the executive chef at Lidia's Pittsburgh in the Strip District. He and his wife live in Hempfield with daughters Abby, 7; Maddy, 5; and Ella, 2 1/2 months.

"In '09, I am going to be more involved with my children in my kitchen, our garden and in their curiosity with food. We will plant a few more tomatoes and peppers to give to our neighbors, make a few more bundles of pasta to share with our friends at our table, and continue our endless search for edible mushrooms."

JUDY DODD is the corporate nutritionist for Giant Eagle.

"The economic mood and the weather are influencing a 2009 resolution for food: to revitalize and reintroduce the comfort foods that make me happy. Revitalize by updating the ingredients and giving them a healthy glow -- like rice pudding, meatloaf with roasted vegetables, lentil soup (actually any soup), pot roast, chicken and noodles.

"For me some are foods of a childhood growing up in a robust center of Downtown Pittsburgh, where our family depended on the chicken and noodles from Donahue's and the wonderful soups from Stouffers. The thoughts still give me a warm and fuzzy feeling. Others are those specialties of my mom and grandmother, the family cooks who knew nothing but starting from scratch and who had survived living with little.

"In 2009, when eating 'healthy' has renewed meaning and going back to the kitchen makes sense for health and dollar reasons, my resolution is invigorating my senses. But I want my meatloaf leaner and the veggies to be dusted with sea salt and olive oil and a touch of rosemary. And maybe I'll try some brown rice for the pudding or some whole grains in my soup. Why not? I have a whole year to perfect my technique and several seasons to work through the specialties that made the house smell great! And it's a great family project! Happy 2009."

JOYCE ROTHERMEL is CEO of Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank.

"In the New Year, we're going to rise to the challenges of this crisis. We're not going to cut back services, and we'll do whatever it takes to meet the increased demand caused by the current economic conditions."

JOHN MUTH owns Mirabelle Restaurant in Oakmont (mirabelleoakmont.com).

"To challenge unfortunate global food trends and contribute to the economic sustainability of the community."

GINA R. LESAKO is a registered dietitian and clinical dietitian at UPMC Passavant (ginalesako.com).

"I've always felt New Year's resolutions are unsuccessful attempts to rid ourselves of our vices. Losing weight is always at the top of most people's lists. This is the time of year when everyone is at the gym and on a diet -- until the Easter Bunny emerges with candy and a few extra pounds in his basket.

"The problem with 'I'm going to be as cut as Michael Phelps/Kelly Ripa by July' is that there isn't a plan of action. You're better off starting out with 'I'm going to drink two fewer Starbucks lattes and just have regular coffee' or 'I'm going to eat out only three times a week.'

"To be successful with a weight-loss resolution is to make it something that is actually something you can fit into your lifestyle.

"Sure, you can forgo bread for a few weeks, maybe a month, avoid anything with fat. However, you're going to raid the office vending machine with the ferocity of a hunter on the first day of doe season in search for peanut M&M's.

"Adapting a healthy lifestyle takes time.

"Here are a few tips to eat less:

- "• Keep a food journal. You're more likely to think about whether you're really hungry or bored.

- "• Fill half your plate with non-starchy vegetables.

- "• Choose a variety of groups at meals. Think about a protein, starch, vegetable and fruit.

"Remember, life is an endurance sport. It's not a race to the finish line."

STEVE DETTINGER is the volunteer coordinator for the Main Street Farmers' Market in Washington, Pa.

"In the coming year, I resolve to give the more unusual greens a try. I'll use tatsoi, dandelions, broccoli rabe, purslane, cresses, chards and pea shoots. I'm going 'green,' or at least greener."

JIM DIETZ is the owner and head chef at Gypsy Cafe, South Side.

"1. To try to cook a new recipe or one of my own new creations each week. Too often I find myself going back to the same dishes over and over again that, while being solid tasty dishes, have become somewhat of a comfort zone for me, so in the new year I am resolving to experiment more, to try new ingredients and flavors and to try to prepare dishes I have never prepared before. I'm not running out to buy an anti-griddle or some other high-tech equipment, but I do want to try to stretch my repertoire. It's important to me that I keep learning and growing as a chef and as a person. I am sure that some of these new creations will turn out well, just as I am sure that some will not, but I will push myself to learn new flavors and new ways of preparing that food while still staying true to my vision of clean simple seasonal flavors simply presented.

"2. I will try to finally kick my cravings for fast food. I need to resist my Styrofoam-boxed urges and stick to eating relatively healthier food not just for my health but for the greater good.

"3. I will strive to run my business smarter instead of harder so I have more time for the aforementioned experimentation and the things that are really important in life, like spending time with my wife and our family or meeting my friends online for a spirited match of 'Gears of War 2.' By organizing and delegating better we can make our business work for us harder than we work for it. My ultimate goal: A well-deserved vacation for my hard-working wife and I."

LIZ EDMUNDS is "The Food Nanny," who wrote the new "The Food Nanny Rescues Dinner: Easy Family Meals for Every Day of the Week" (thefoodnanny.com). The Park City, Utah, mother of seven recommends that families resolve to eat dinner together at least five times a week.

"When families eat together consistently, everyone wins! If your wish for the New Year is to gather your family around the dinner table on a consistent basis, the plan that I have been using for the past 30 years will help you do just that.

"My plan takes just about 15 minutes of your time every two weeks. The hardest part about putting dinner on the table is trying to figure out what to cook. That is where my plan comes in. I developed 'theme' nights for my family and made up a two-week menu. Two weeks because one week comes around much too quick -- before you know it, you're having to think about planning another menu. Two weeks is perfect! It also saves you money in the long run. You are not running to the store every day and

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loading up on food that is not necessary. You shop for what is on your list, come home and unload the groceries and forget about what you will be cooking for the next two weeks because you already know! Monday: Comfort Food Night, Tuesday: Italian Night, Wednesday: Fish/Meatless Night, Thursday: Mexican Night, Friday: Pizza Night, Saturday: Grill Night, Sunday: Tradition Day.

"I selected about 12 of our most favorite dishes for each night and rotated them as we craved eating them. Some recipes we ate more than others, but the kids loved looking forward to dinner each night with the theme, and I never got tired of cooking. It was fun! More than that, it was rewarding as a mom."

DEB MORTILLARO is a principal at Palate Partners in the Strip District.

"My friend Steve and I are going to read Escoffier's cookbook every week and once a month cook something very classic using his methods. We attempted this once before and fell off the wagon, so we are jumping back on!"

EVAN VERBANIC is co-owner of Cherry Valley Organics, a certified-organic producer of cut flowers, herbs and vegetables near Burgettstown. He also runs a community-supported agriculture program.

"It might be a bit preachy, but 'Go Organic, Stay Local' has always been our personal credo -- and one that we will continue to promote in the new year. If you want to support farms, then support farms directly, not via farm-related or 'pro-farming' organizations (nonprofit or otherwise). The map is not the territory, as the saying goes."

HENRY DEWEY is co-owner Penn Avenue Fish Co. in the Strip. And like a lot of people who've hit their 40s, he's starting to think more seriously about his health. Or as he puts it:

"I want to do it before someone tells me I have to. I'm going to start eating foods that are lower in cholesterol and try to include more fresh fruits and vegetables. And I'm going to ignore those occasional cravings for McDonald's hamburgers because they're definitely bad for you."

CAROLYN O'NEIL is a registered dietician and co-author of "The Dish on Eating Healthy and Being Fabulous!" (Atria Books, 2004).

"Rather than asking yourself, 'When would be the best and easiest time to diet?' challenge yourself to practice eating right during the most challenging times!

"For instance, Super Bowl party coming up? Bring the platter of fresh veggies and hummus to the party. That way there'll be something low-cal and healthy to snack on. No excuses that 'I had to scarf up the Chili Cheese Nachos. It was the only thing to eat!"

"Or, dining out for a friend's birthday celebration? Plan to enjoy a piece of the candle-lit cake at the end by NOT getting the fried calamari or creamy soup to start! It's all about balance and planning ahead, especially when you know you're going to be faced with diet busting temptations."

SAM DiBATTISTA owns Vivo in Bellevue.

"I'm going to continue to try to improve and grow as a chef and use things in my cooking that I've never seen or heard of, such as pawpaw, the only tropical fruit that's grown in this part of the country. At home, I'm going to try to eat more naturally and just as important, not as much. It's a good idea for people to reduce their calories in general."

LEE YOUNG is the Washington County extension director, horticulture, for the Penn State Cooperative Extension.

"I'm going to increase the proportion of locally produced foods in my family's diet. I'm also going to teach homeowners how they can grow some of their own food (this will be the feature topic of our Spring Gardening Seminar on Feb. 28, Trinity Middle School, Washington).

"I'm also going to continue to find ways to link local producers with consumers, such as promoting the sale of locally grown products for fundraisers and events, expanding the capacity of local markets, and working to break down barriers between growers and wholesale buyers.

"Lastly, I'm going to grow 1,200 heads of garlic on a friend's farm. Just for the sheer pleasure of doing it."

Resolutions were compiled by staffers Gretchen McKay, China Millman and Bob Batz Jr. and freelancers Miriam Rubin and Rebecca Sodergren.

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