Eat Your Greens

Delicious, Nutritious and Not Just For Dinner Anymore

Green Smoothie and Palm Green Energy Bars

Greens for breakfast, greens for lunch, greens for dinner, and green smoothies just about any time — at Palm Greens Café in Palm Springs, the marriage of greens and great taste is just one of the winning combinations of a booming business for owners Greg Schmitz and Jeff Huyett. Schmitz, also the executive chef, is a vocal proponent of organic, healthy, great-tasting food and he encourages everyone to give it a try, whether at home or in a local restaurant.

"The one thing I notice is that if you're eating properly, everything else is easier," says Schmitz. "You have more energy, your home life is better, and stress is easier to deal with. Jeff and I decided that our concept would be farm fresh to the table, using organic ingredients whenever possible."

Schmitz grew up on a farm with electricity that came from a windmill and no indoor plumbing. His family milked their own cows, made their own butter and also had chickens, pigs and horses. In a small town of 60 residents, one set of Schmitz's grandparents lived at one end of the town, while the other set of grandparents lived at the opposite end of town.

"I spent a lot of time with my grandmother who had lost her husband," recalls Schmitz. "She was always cooking and baking, and everyone in the family came over for Sunday dinner. That's where I developed my love of food."

Prior to moving to Palm Springs, Schmitz and Huyett owned a very successful restaurant and two food trucks in Maui, Hawaii — Jawz Tacos — which boasted an 18-item salsa bar.

Maui-meets-Palms Springs is the cozy, casual setting for Palm Greens Café, complete with vintage surfing movies and mellow tunes. Many customers visit daily, eager to order a favorite meal or to try something new.

The Palm Greens Café features a widely varied menu, with organic, vegan and gluten-free choices. Breakfast items include organic breakfast bowls, vegan blueberry buckwheat pancakes, huevos rancheros, fresh fruit, and gluten-free oatmeal.

The lunch menu offers a wide variety of salads, wraps, stir fry bowls, homemade soups and sandwiches and handcrafted burgers. Dinners include daily specials, roasted aromatic lamb shank, New York strip of beef (organic, grass-fed), roast duck French dip sandwiches, a vegetable red curry bowl and more.

Healthy libations abound, from organic coffee and teas to fresh squeezed juices, smoothies and root beer floats. The best-selling Palm Greens Smoothie is packed with greens and frozen bananas, and tastes like a slightly minty, frosty dessert. For those who tip-toe around the notion of eating greens, the options are so varied and delicious, you may become a green convert.

Both of these recipes may be altered according to taste. The important thing is to use what you have at hand and to make sure the ingredients are as fresh and organic as possible.

Green Smoothie

(makes one 12 to 14 oz. serving)
2 cups greens (packed): any combination of greens such as kale, spinach, Swiss chard or collard.
1 cup frozen banana slices
3-6 large mint leaves (to taste)
10 oz. (1 ¼ cups) unfiltered apple juice or water

Optional (add or exchange any of the ingredients below but always include the greens)
1 cup blueberries, fresh or frozen
1 tsp fresh ginger, peeled and grated
1 tsp organic coconut oil

Combine all ingredients in a blender, putting greens in first. Blend slowly and increase speed. Blend thoroughly until all ingredients are a smooth consistency. Serve in a tall glass with a sprig of mint for garnish.

Palm Greens Energy Bars

These delicious energy bars make great snacks and are wonderful to eat with fresh apple slices. They are a healthy alternative to processed sweets and are perfect for school lunches and for traveling. They may also be made using gluten-free granola and gluten-free rolled oats.

1 cup almond butter
1 cup coconut oil
1 jar brown rice syrup (1 lb, 5 oz)
10 cups low-fat granola
4 cups rolled oats
3 cups raisins
1 cup pumpkin seeds
1 cup sunflower seeds
1 cup coconut flakes, unsweetened

Disposable gloves for pressing ingredients into pan

Heat oven to 375 degrees Farenheit.

Cover a large ½ inch-sided baking sheet with parchment paper lightly coated with coconut oil.

In a large bowl, combine almond butter, coconut oil and rice syrup. Mix well. Combine the rest of the ingredients — granola through coconut flakes — in separate large bowl. Then combine with almond butter mix. Wearing disposable gloves rubbed with coconut oil, blend all ingredients together by hand.

When ingredients are well mixed, empty bowl onto baking sheet and press down evenly into pan. The ingredients may seem too large for the baking sheet, but will respond to continued pressure. Using a good, heavy knife, cut desired amount of bars, at least 24 to 30. With the density of these bars, you may cut even smaller portions. After cutting bars, bake for 5 minutes.

Remove baking sheet from oven and place it on a wire rack to cool. Once the bars have cooled completely, use a spatula to remove the cut bars and wrap individually in clear plastic wrap. Store wrapped bars in an airtight container or large sealed plastic bags. Bars may be frozen for up to three months.

Palm Greens Café, located at 611 S. Palm Canyon Drive (in the Sun Center shopping center next to Revivals), is open seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., Wednesday and Thursday evenings from 5 to 9 p.m., and Friday and Saturday evenings from 5 to 10 p.m. For more information call 760-864-9900 or visit www.palmgr www.palmgreenscafe.com

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