

## Epicurean Group and Nutrition

*“Eating healthy fuels your body and brain to improve your learning, mood, and memory. Brain foods provide nutrients such as Omega-3 Fatty Acids, DHA, EPA, choline, iron, glucose, and vitamins that aid in brain development.” - Alma Nocchi, RD CD LD*

Epicurean Group believes nutrition is more than just serving great, nourishing foods. We believe in educating the community about why foods provide good nutrition and how they can incorporate good nutritional practices into their lives. Epicurean Group will continue to create new programs and provide up-to-date nutritional information for everyone.

Epicurean Group’s mantra is *fresh. honest. local* food prepared from scratch. Our goal is to keep you happy and healthy. Unlike other food service competitors, **we do not believe in highly processed, frozen foods high in sodium, fat, sugar, and fillers.** We know that quality products may cost a little more than highly processed foods, but we believe that your body will benefit from *fresh. honest. local.*

This document outlines our food and nutrition philosophy and provides an overview of programs and links to resources to help you understand and navigate these programs for your location and guests.

### Food and Nutrition Philosophy

A basic concept of nutrition and healthy eating has been known for years: **balance**. In a world where all kinds of fad diets and eating trends exist, the key to good health and nutrition has always been and will continue to be a balance between eating and physical activity. The topics below help outline what good, basic values are in providing our students, residents, guests, and community foods that will nourish their bodies and minds, as opposed to empty calories.

#### Food Literacy

Epicurean Group embraces Food Literacy Movements. There are a few out there, and their overall messages are to engage people of all ages in better understanding and involvement in food – nourishing our bodies and our minds and understanding food- how it is grown, prepared, and served can benefit us, our communities, and our environment. The links below provide information on a few projects that share our philosophy.

[The Food Literacy Project](#) – focuses on leading students to discover holistic wellness through gardening, farming, and hands-on activities.

[Food Literacy Center](#) - teaches students cooking, nutrition, and gardening to improve their health and environment.

[Nourish Food + Community](#) is an educational initiative designed to open conversations about food, health, and sustainability.

[LiveWell Program](#) - Our sustainability programs are the foundation of our menus. Cooking from scratch, mindfulness, physical activity, cooking skills, and basic nutritional principles of our **LiveWell** program are all part of our company culture that we are proud of. It’s also important that your community members develop a positive and healthy relationship with *fresh. honest. local* food over processed, frozen fast food used by competing food service companies.

## MENU PROGRAMS

### Slow Food

All our food literacy programs incorporate the principles of [Slow Food](#), which is one of the first global organizations for the sustainable food movement. Our business model directly reflects their mission/vision: Good, Clean, and Fair Food. We are delighted to be partnered with a well-known Nutritional Educational Chef who provides us with training and information about this growing food movement.

Three stellar food programs, **Ancient Grains**, **Slow Beans**, and **Get the Skinny on Healthy Fat**, are featured in our menu programs. These incorporate our good, clean, and fair food principles while providing delicious and nutritious options for our audiences.

**Ancient Grains** was our first specialty food program, and it provides a variety of grain ideas, options, and recipes to encourage the use of these nutrient-packed amazing grains.

Look for the **Ancient Grains Program Guide** [here](#)

**Slow Beans** (Legumes, pulses, non-GMO) have made a comeback in the past several years, especially within the [Slow Food](#) community. Their [Slow Beans](#) campaign is an international movement. Slow Beans is an initiative to promote and increase the supply and demand of native and heirloom legume varieties. We offer these special beans at our salad bars not just to feature the diversity of plant-based proteins and fiber but also to introduce these amazing products to students and our clients and encourage them to become aware and purchase and grow these beans to keep them from disappearing.

Look for the **Slow Beans Program Guide** [here](#)

**Get the Skinny on Healthy Fats** is a program that is part of our pop-ups, after-hour programs, and nutrition fairs. These programs highlight great foods that use healthy fats for maximum nutritional impact. See our Nutrition Cards section for links to more information.

Look for the **Skinny on Healthy Fats Information** [here](#)

**Plant Inspired** is our plant-forward program encouraging great foods without animal products, thus typically touting reduced calories, fat, and saturated fat. Our clients, students, guests, and residents ask for more plant-forward dining balanced with flavor. It is well known that any way we can reduce animal product production and consumption, we can make positive strides in reducing environmental impact and lowering risks of obesity, coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and even some forms of cancer.

Look for the **Plant Inspired Recipe Guide** [here](#)

**The Dirty Dozen and Clean Fifteen** are foods marked annually by the [EWG](#) (the Environmental Working Group) to be the worst and best fruits and vegetables in relation to the number of pesticides they are typically grown with. We believe that foods on the Dirty Dozen should be purchased organic to provide our guests and clientele with the best foods possible. The Clean 15 are foods grown commercially and safe to purchase non-organic. These lists are updated annually.

Look for the **Dirty Dozen and Clean 15 lists**, as well as other **Sustainability information**, on our website [here](#)

**LiveWell** is the program created to provide delicious foods in all our locations that are delicious and ample but also nutritionally analyzed. We have years of seasonal dishes to choose from – salads, grilled items, street food options, cook-to-order specialties, and comfort foods- providing each location with many choices to add to their daily menu selections.

**The LiveWell focus is to provide meals that have:**

- **Great Flavor**
- **Responsible Portion Sizes, yet ample enough to be satisfying.**
- **Lower Calories – each meal is 600 calories or less.**
- **Lower Fat – each meal is 20 g fat or lower, and 7 g saturated fat or lower.**
- **Lower Sodium – Sodium is controlled in each recipe.**
- **High Nutritional Value – Higher fiber, complex carbohydrates and protein**

Look for the LiveWell programs [here](#)

### **Focus on Specific Nutritional Attributes:**

Our Menus are developed to reflect research on the latest and best practices in nutrition.

We want to provide our culinarians and teams with up-to-date resources that can help educate and support our menu philosophies.

**Antioxidants:** Foods that fight oxidation that may cause cellular damage in the body.

**Definition** Molecules that fight "free radical" and oxidation formation in our bodies. Free radicals can cause cellular damage that can lead to cancer and Alzheimer's disease. Our bodies naturally produce Antioxidants, but many of these substances are found abundantly in the fresh foods we eat. Antioxidants can also fight inflammation, which can cause aches and pains as we age.

**Anti-inflammatory components:** Foods rich in omega-3s and other compounds thought to ease inflammation.

**Definition** Inflammation in our bodies can cause acne, diabetes, aches and pains, upset stomach, and much more. Inflammation is our body's natural immune response to an illness, lack of sleep, or injury. Certain foods can cause excess inflammation and include Sugar, Processed Foods, Artificial Colors, and Sweeteners (our Food Pledge includes limiting/eliminating high fructose corn syrup, excessive sugary foods, GMO (Genetically Modified Organism), and other foods that may cause inflammation and disease).

**Enhanced immunity:** Nutrient-rich foods ward off colds, flu, and infections.

**Definition** Foods rich in Iron, Probiotics, Vitamin C, and other vitamins and minerals may help boost your immune system, making you less likely to catch a cold or flu. Getting enough rest and including physical activity in your lifestyle is essential for a healthy immune system.

**High Performance:** Healthy carbs, lean proteins, and vitamins fuel and repair active muscles.

**Definition** Healthy Carbohydrates, Lean Proteins, Hydration, and Vitamins and Minerals are crucial to building and repairing muscles, improving performance and recovery.

An athlete's diet must provide the right amount of energy, nutrients, and fluids the body needs. No single supplement can do this. It takes a variety of foods every day.

Our **Feeding the Athlete** program includes nutritious and energy-packed breakfast, lunch, and snacks that student-athletes need for peak performance and recovery.

### Get the Skinny on Healthy Fats

What is good fat? Our program highlights the fats to avoid and the healthy fats to enjoy for better cardiovascular health and ease of inflammation.

**Definition** Fats are an essential part of your diet. Some fats offer health-protecting benefits to prevent disease. Omega-3 fatty acids are a type of polyunsaturated fatty acid that may help lower cholesterol levels and support heart health. Monounsaturated fats improve blood cholesterol levels, decreasing your risk of heart disease.

### Mental development

Plants, veggies, and compounds rich in factors that contribute to healthy cognitive development, memory, and focus.

**Definition** Eating healthy fuels your body and brain to improve your learning, mood, and memory. Brain foods have nutrients such as Omega-3 Fatty Acids, DHA, EPA, choline, iron, glucose, and vitamins that aid in brain development.

### Brain Food

Eating well is not just good for the body but also for the mind. Brain foods provide nutrients such as Omega-3 Fatty Acids, DHA, EPA, choline, iron, glucose, and vitamins that aid in brain development.

### Super Foods

**Definition** Super Foods describes foods that may have more significant health benefits than other types of foods. Typically, Super Foods are high in antioxidants and other vital nutrients such as Calcium, Vitamin D, and Phosphorus.

### Super Friends

Much like the Avengers, superfoods are even more powerful when combined. For example, when you combine **Tomatoes with Olive Oil**, the antioxidant activity in the lycopene in the tomatoes increases, not to mention getting more good HDL cholesterol from the olive oil. Combining Superfoods improves the absorption and digestion of nutrients.

### Education and Team Building Through Cooking – Demos and/or Cooking Together

Our Menu programs are geared to highlight specific seasonal food with nutrient impact. Seasonal food not only tastes better, but it's also more nutrient-packed and the prices are reasonable.

- **Food tastes/samples**
  - Provide easy-to-prepare foods and home portion recipes of foods you want to introduce them to – slow beans, ancient grains, etc.
    - Quinoa Mac n' Cheese is always a favorite.
- **Demos by our chefs or visiting chefs or nutrition experts\***

- Preparing your salad dressing
- Making easy morning smoothies
- **Meet the Farmer/Specialty Food Vendor – one special or multiple, like a Farmers Market\***
  - Offer samples of foods from or prepared from local farmers/specialty food vendors.
- **Team Building Cooking Programs: the sky's the limit on these! A few ideas are:**
  - Mystery Baskets – each team creates an appetizer from their mystery basket!
  - Italian Foods – make fresh pasta and sauce.
  - Pacific Rim – make fresh dumplings and learn to cook Asian specialties in a wok or large-rimmed pan.
  - Vegetarian/Vegan specialties – granola bars, working with squashes, ancient grains, or slow beans.
  - Lower Fat cooking- Fish en Papillote (Over-Roasted in Parchment Paper), Roasted Veggies, Whole Grains, Dark Chocolate or Avocado Mousse.

\*Contact the Corporate office for assistance with coordination if needed

## **RESOURCES:**

Below is a list of Resources that each Manager and Chef should be familiar with:

**Nutrition Topic Information – This information is now posted online here:**

[Nutritional Cards - Epicurean Group \(epicurean-group.com\)](http://epicurean-group.com)

**General Nutrition**

**Veganism**

**Vegetarianism**

**Fad Diets**

**Feeding the Athlete**

**Carbohydrates**

**Cholesterol**

**Get the Skinny on Healthy Fats**

**Allergies, Food Intolerances and Celiac Disease**

**Gluten**

**Decreasing Your Environmental Impact**

**Osteoporosis**

**Nutrition Topic Flyers:**

**Antioxidants**

**Anti-Inflammatory**

**Advance Immunity**

**High Performance**

**The Skinny on Healthy Fats**

**Brain Food**

**Super Foods**

**Super Friends**