

PHARM TABLE

A HEALTHY HARMONY OF FLAVORS



Chef Elizabeth Johnson discusses the importance of living and eating naturally for optimal health. (Photo by Bria Woods)

Chef Elizabeth Johnson never starts her menu with a salad. Through her new company, Pharm Table, the Culinary Institute of America alum shares her research about how different foods influence the digestive process.

"I always start my meals with a soup," Chef Johnson explained. "If we start with a salad, the body has to work harder to break things down due to the raw nature of the ingredients."

A champion of anti-inflammatory foods, the chef's motto is to make natural foods taste great, prepared so that the nourishing values are still intact. She also serves local sprouted ingredients because they are regenerative and encourage easy digestion.

"The focus is on digestion, it's not about calories," she added.

Chef Johnson conducted a demonstration for young women visiting San Antonio from Mexico and across the U.S. who came to participate in the first Women Ambassadors Forum on July 17. The leadership conference teaches how to plan projects for the betterment of their communities. Many of the delegates elected to focus on female health and Chef Johnson provided them with information about food processes and how to live life as naturally as possible.

"If you feel like a million bucks on the inside, then you will look

like a million bucks on the outside," she told them.

One educational highlight was a dish that included lime, pickled ginger & honey, Wagyu beef and celery leche de tigre. The chef explained the rationale behind serving the food in a particular order and including certain combinations.

For example, she started with ginger, which fuels the digestive system in our bodies. In the dish, a little bit of salt and coconut alongside the ginger and honey yielded a sweet and salty flavor profile. She explained, step by step, the correct order to eat in order to maximize the benefit: dip the ginger in the local Texas honey and chew it twenty times. According to Chef Johnson, the mix of salty and sweet with the textural component of the coconut is a common medical tradition from India, where they believe in starting meals by activating all the senses. After the initial taste, the chef instructed the guests to pierce the skewer into the Wagyu beef and drink the milk.

"The combination of all the flavors opens the mouth, 'abre la boca,'" the bilingual chef, who lived in both Mexico and Honduras, emphasized. "In this season of heat and fire, it's all about cooling the body down."

To learn more, visit www.pharmtable.com. - Rocio Guenther