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Around the corner, the number of low-carb dieters at Anthony's Italian Kitchen has dropped, and they're drifting back to pizza, pasta and panini sandwiches. Owner Tony Barassa used to sell about 50 low-carb lunches a day; now he's lucky to sell a dozen.

Barassa said his customers tell him they got bored with Atkins-style diets, which are heavy on salads, meats, cheeses and eggs. White bread, pasta, potatoes and other carbo-loaded foods are blacklisted.

"It's something you get tired of," he said. "How many omelets can you eat?"

Across town, Big Sky Baking Co. owner Martha Elkus said she's not surprised that whole grains are winning customers.

"We've always maintained that all carbs are not created equal. Whole-grain is a complex carbohydrate. Complex carbs are the best source of energy," she said.

Overall, the shift away from low-carb is drawing people back not just to bread but to other products that took a hit, like orange juice, cereals, potatoes, bagels and pasta, said Joel Crowder of grocer Kroger Co. in Cincinnati.

Meanwhile, many consumers have given up on low-carb breads and pasta.

"There were a lot of low-carb products that were rushed to the market that didn't taste good," Crowder said. "That's probably what turned a lot of consumers off."

Recipes

Cold Cream of Zucchini and Watercress Soup

- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup chopped onions
- 1 tsp minced garlic
- 3/4 lb. zucchini, trimmed and chopped
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp ground white pepper
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 1 sprig thyme
- 1 cup packed watercress leaves
- 1 tbsp minced parsley leaves
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 cup creme fraiche or sour cream



In a saucepan, melt the butter over medium-high heat. Add the onions and cook, stirring, for 3 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for 15 seconds. Add the zucchini, salt, and pepper, and cook until tender. Add the stock and thyme and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 20 minutes. Add the watercress and let wilt, about 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and discard the thyme sprig.

With a hand-held immersion blender or in batches in a food processor, puree the soup. Return to the heat and stir in the cream. Heat gently and cook for 5 minutes. Adjust the seasoning, to taste, keeping in mind, that salt is less evident in cold foods. Let cool and refrigerate until well chilled, at least 4 to 6 hours. Transfer to a large thermos. To serve, pour into double-handled cream soup bowls or decorative cups. Swirl creme fraiche into each serving and garnish with watercress sprigs and/or chives. Serve with cheese crackers.

Chocolate Zucchini Bread

- 2 cups flour
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 3 eggs, beaten

- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 3 squares unsweetened baking chocolate, melted and cooled
- 2 cups packed grated unpeeled zucchini
- 1 cup chopped nuts

Sift flour with soda, baking powder and salt. Add eggs, oil, sugar, vanilla and melted chocolate. Mix well. Stir in zucchini and fold in nuts. Coat 2 loaf pans with vegetable cooking spray. Divide batter between pans. Bake at 350 for 55 minutes. Let stand a few minutes before removing from pans to cool.

Sesame Mango Chicken and Watercress

- 1 bunch watercress
- 1 tbsp groundnut oil
- 4 boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 8 oz. ready-cooked basmati rice
- 2 tbsp sweet and sour stir-fry sauce
- 1 ripe mango, peeled and cut into small cubes
- 1 tbsp light soy sauce
- 1 tbsp medium sherry
- 8 oz. bean sprouts, rinsed
- 1 tbsp sesame seeds, toasted



Heat the oil in a wok, add the chicken strips and cook for 5 minutes stirring well, until browned and almost cooked through. Empty the rice into the wok and cook, stirring, for 2-3 minutes until piping hot. Meanwhile, in a medium pan, gently heat the sweet and sour sauce with the mango for 3-4 minutes until the sauce begins to bubble.

Pour the soy sauce and sherry over the chicken and rice in the wok, tossing to ensure the rice is well coated. Remove the wok from the heat and add the bean sprouts and watercress, stirring well to allow the watercress to wilt. To serve, divide the chicken and rice between four plates, spoon the mango and sauce over the chicken and rice and scatter with the toasted sesame seeds.