

Lite Bites For The New Year

How to enjoy dine-out taste without paying the pounds price

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by Alexandra Holland



Wildflour Restaurant & Bakery

1212 4th St. SW, Roanoke

Wildflour may have a reputation as a diet-friendly restaurant, but that was never co-owner Doug Robison's goal.

"We've been pigeonholed as healthy and vegetarian," he says, "but we didn't set out to be a 'light' restaurant."

Robison says he and his wife Evie simply wanted to serve "food that tastes good as well as whole-food products."

But with much of the menu comprised of salads, vegetarian sandwiches and entrées, it's easy to see Wildflour's appeal to the health-conscious.

"Every one of our salads is light," Robison says. "Some have cheeses, but we can cut back on those if a customer wants. We don't have 'light' dressings, per se, but are all made with good, non-hydrogenated oils."

There are eight salads to choose from. The Hollywood Cobb is a friend to protein-lovers, with grilled chicken breast, bacon, egg and cheeses. The spinach garden and Marketplace salads also include a mixture of meats and cheeses, along with olives.

The portabella mushroom sandwich, hummus wrap and a tempeh (cured soybean) burger are meat-free alternatives.

"We customize anything," says Robison. "Every item lists what's in it, aside from minute spices."

Robison says he commonly serves dishes without Wildflour's homemade bread, for the carb-weary crowd.

For those who want to fill up on low-fat fiber, Evie's Red Beans & Rice fits the bill. The Old Southwest Burrito includes a "hearty helping" of red beans as well, rolled inside a whole-wheat tortilla and topped with homemade salsa.

Robison also suggests soups, especially on those cold winter days. There's Greek Lentil and Autumn Garden, with yellow split peas, carrots, potatoes and thyme.

"They are hearty and low in calories," he says. "And the fat content in Greek Lentil is next to nothing."

Lastly, this is one restaurant where you don't have to skip dessert. The low-fat brownie is popular with the Weight Watchers crowd, weighing in at a mere "two points" – that's four fat grams and 90 calories to the rest of the world.