



UP YOUR  
HEART

BY MARK BOND

Dying is your penultimate gift to civilization. Your eventual demise allows for a bit more elbow room on our planet, more oxygen made available to an ever-depleting atmosphere, and more food and fresh water for the rest of us. So when you belly up to the trough to inhale your daily triple bacon cheeseburger, the two-legged alfalfa vegans grazing at an adjoining table are quietly lauding your gluttony. While slovenly carnivorous quadruple-bypass candidates lather their meal with butters and salts, nutrition conscious valetudinarians measure every gram of sustenance that passes their lips, certain of its therapeutic value to every cell of the body temple.

Since the dawn of civilization, prairies, woodlands, oceans, and streams have bequeathed to their stewards a bounty that holds the secrets to all the world's infirmity. If you're a student of the balanced life force, Yin & Yang, for example, then you'll appreciate that all natural ailments can only exist in a world where there's a natural cure. Passionflower, for example, whose green tendrils climb to lengths of thirty feet and boast white and purple sweet-scented flowers, produce a compound called harmala, which was found to dilate the coronary arteries surrounding the heart; thereby reducing the risk of a myocardial infarction (heart attack). Before Hippocrates chronicled his achievements, before Pasteur's Germ Theory, before Alexander Fleming's discovery of Penicillin in 1928, natives with no written word were rubbing hyssop leaves on a wound to heal it.

The efficacy of an herb, flower, or root was a combination of faith, superstition, trial and error in many early medicinal preparations. Much of that division of faith and skepticism remains in our contemporary, scientifically and technologically advanced society. Why worry about the effects of hypercholesterolemia while you're tearing into that Philly Cheese Steak? You know that once your arteries clog, it's nothing a quick trip to the cardiac cath lab can't fix, right? Need I remind you about Obamacare? Because our debilities are a product of our own design, it makes sense to consider a diet of moderation. Just as there is a balance in everything natural, we can discover a balance between healthy dietary choices and those we know to be detrimental, though we must periodically indulge.

Trying to convince someone to alter their diet is almost as difficult as asking someone to change religions, so we won't waste any words in a persuasive posture. But wouldn't you like, at the very least, to be exposed to some of the ancient wisdom of herbal health and what a few extra days on our earth might unveil?

## GARLIC

The world's oldest medical text, 'Ebers Papyrus,' 1500 BC, identifies garlic in over forty of its preparations. It was believed, at the time of this chronicling, to be the panacea to prevent illness and increase strength and endurance. In today's medical circles, there is no synthetic regimen that impacts on so many cardiovascular risk factors simultaneously. There are specific drugs that lower cholesterol, manage blood pressure, and impair the unhealthy formation of a thrombus (blood clot), thereby reducing the risk of heart attacks, angina and strokes. Garlic does it all...and it tastes great on everything...well, except ice cream.

## TURMERIC

The staple of Indian cuisine and curry dishes. This ancient spice had been touted as a whole body cleanser. The active ingredients in Turmeric have been found to prompt detoxification of a sluggish liver, to reduce the formation of cholesterol and blood clots, and regional naturopaths boast its anti-inflammatory capabilities.

## RED PEPPERS

Capsaicin, the compound that causes the flames to lick the back of your throat, is also responsible for lowering your cholesterol and helping to impede a number of factors relating to heart disease. HINT: The casein protein in milk is your best defense against the jalapeño scorch...this protein in milk literally pulls the capsaicin from your taste buds for almost immediate relief.

## GINGER

Heart disease accounts for over half of American deaths each year. Ginger can help you wage that war by controlling three of the major

factors associated with HD: decreasing circulating cholesterol, decreasing blood pressure and helping to prevent blood clots that trigger heart attacks and strokes.

## OREGANO

Contains thymol and carvacrol that serve as potent antibacterial agents—Overall a powerful antioxidant (Cancer fighter) and rich in phytonutrients. 42x more antioxidant activity than apples / 30x more than potatoes / 12x more than oranges...need I say more?

## CINNAMON

Also flexing antimicrobial muscle, however, this sweet spice boasts anti-blood clotting and anti-inflammatory properties that assist in preventing clumping of blood platelets and help to boost brain function.

Literally hundreds of others are awaiting your discovery- herbs, fruits, teas, and roots, all most likely within a short walk of your home. Adding a spice here and there is a wonderful way to mix up your dining experience while boosting your body's immunity to an accelerated degeneration of any number of body systems. Herbs contain minerals, vitamins, salts, and nutrients that continually help the body resist the insults of disease, strengthen tissues, and improve many important bodily systems. Many herbs and spices also contain glycosides, which are important sugars responsible for the proper functioning of the heart and bloodstream. Yet devoid of nutritional value, salt remains the favored addition to every meal. Would you trade an extra day for a tantalizing twist to your usual casserole?

All food is an acquired taste. From our earliest meals, we learn to enjoy food the way Mom cooked it. It doesn't necessarily mean that it's superior to another version; it's simply what we've become accustomed to. That's a difficult habit to break, perhaps even harder to admit to Mom that you've discovered a tastier, healthier way to prepare a given meal.

If only for the sake of adventure, rather than liberally crusting your Delmonico with salt, braise it with rosemary, garlic, and olive oil for a gastronomic nirvana. While we're on the subject of beef, here's some trivia: Grilling meat produces 'heterocyclic amines', which have been identified as the grilling carcinogen. By marinating your meat prior to grilling with olive oil, rosemary, thyme, chives, the antioxidants in these spices block the HCAs from forming on your steak.

With untold numbers of spices and herbs, there's an equally infinite number of clever ways to implement them into your cooking for a healthy heart. It looks like you may want to hang around on earth a little bit longer after all.



## Fired-Up Chicken

If you're like most recently converted health food nuts, you'll be turning to poultry as an alternative to red meat. To turn an ordinary slab of breast into something to look forward to, coat your chicken with whisked egg. This acts as a binder for all the wonderful spices you'll coat the meat with. And prior to baking, sear breasts in a skillet with hot olive oil to seal the juices within.

### Tex-Mex Style

1/4 tsp of each of following: garlic powder, chili powder, black pepper & oregano

### Southwestern

1/4 tsp of each: black pepper, chili powder, red pepper flakes, cumin and Tabasco

### French

1/4 tsp. of each: dried basil, rosemary, thyme and sprizzle with white wine while baking