

My Friend Leany

By Musafir

Today, I got the news of my friend, Leany's sad demise. By the way, 'Leany' is an ethnic name. It has nothing to do with my friend's physical appearance. Ironically, Leany only ate to live, but instead of living, he died. My only sorrow is that Leany could not fulfill his lifelong dream of forming a 'Gastronomic Anonymous' group – a fellowship of men and women to help others relinquish good food in favor of fads and other crap. Life, perhaps, was too short for Leany to rid humanity of good eating and drinking."

If good food were sex, Leany preached celibacy by forcing others to abstain. Whenever I think of Leany, I visualize a cucumber in thick glasses. This should come as nobody's surprise that Leany's favorite drink was homemade cucumber juice. The morning meal in Leany household was actually a mourning meal – seaweeds, soybeans and, of course, cucumber juice. Lunch consisted of crispy lettuce wraps. Dinner time at Leany's looked like a raw-food café with disgusting servings of sea-vegetable harvested off the coast of Japan, loaded with vitamins and minerals and Yerba tea, high in antioxidants with carrot flax crackers for extra taste and nutrition. Leany was left to himself walking a righteous but lonely path for the rest of his life.

Bland, dull, crude, disgusting, flat, gross, raunchy, tacky and tasteless foods were Leany's obsession. His conversation was always limited to diet, less sugar, fewer carbohydrates, anti-carcinogenic and reduced daily caloric intake. His favorite book was *Beyond the 120-Year Diet – How to Double Your Vital Years*. Though I always disliked Leany's food

habits, I will always relish our differences. While I always enjoyed good things to eat, Leany worried about bad things to eat. While I ate with all five senses, Leany senselessly swallow seeds, herbs and other inedibles all his life. Contrary to Leany's idea of a balanced diet, I still believe that a diet is balanced when you have cookies in each hand. My idea is that if you eat something and nobody sees you eat, it has no calories. Unfortunately, Leany always hated me for that.



To Leany's credit, I must say that he was a very flexible person. He listened to every guru-of-the-month and always acted on their advice. For example, some months his slogan would be: "Eat no carbohydrates." Then it would simply change to "Eat no fat." Some months it would be 'South Beach Diet' and then change to 'Scarsdale.' Once upon a time,

Leany only consumed molasses and apple vinegar chewing each mouthful of food 50 times a day. He adopted Dr. Robert Atkins' low-carb, high-protein diet in 1972 then replaced that with Herman Tarnower's high protein, low calorie diet in 1979. He adopted Nathan Pritikin's formula in 1981 and replaced that with Judy Mazel's "Beverly Hills Diet" in 1985. In recent years Leany has been living on cabbage soup, grapefruit and apple vinegar. Leany kept on jumping from one fad diet to another in a scramble to lose weight and gain health. In the end he lost it all and died. If we are what we eat then Leany was dull, bitter and unseasoned. I will always remember my friend, Leany.