

# Phenomenal Woman? Phenomenal Salad.



Having a baby is an amazing privilege. Having a postpartum body is an amazing pain in my ass. Let's back up. I've had the same body since I was 15 years old. Five feet, ten inches and 145 pounds since I was 15 frikkin' years old. Being 15, a girl and 5'10" is difficult. Being 32, a woman and 5'10" is awesome. And I know what you're thinking, "Oh, poor little giant skinny girl finally has some thighs, cry me a river". And I get it. I really do. However, I've known my body to be the same exact shape and size for the past 17 years and now all of a sudden there's a muffin top and hips and I have no idea what to do with myself. Yes, there's also an amazingly sweet baby but did you not hear me when I said there's a muffin top too because there is. If we still lived in Michigan and I could hide under bulky sweaters and that sweet, sweet Midwestern physique I would be a happier camper. But alas, we live in Miami, land of perpetual summer and Real Housewives and billboard after billboard advertising liposuction with completely unrealistic before and after pictures of "happy" clients (mostly women). I consider myself a pretty confident woman but even the most

strong amongst us start to break after being exposed to the expectations of Miami living. And please, I want to get all 'Phenomenal Woman', Maya Angelou on myself and most days I can but the reality is that it takes work to get to know this new body of mine. I am so grateful for the life it nourished and brought forth but no one said I couldn't be grateful for all that AND miss my favorite skinny jeans . . . right?

OK, so this brings us to the food (the food!). In celebration of Meatless Monday and in trying to keep the carb consumption to a minimum I made a kosher replica of my favorite salad from the now closed Calliope Cafe in Chicago. I stumbled upon Calliope Cafe thanks to my cousin, Mike. The place was the size of my first apartment and everything was made and prepared in house. It was the perfect Chicago 'mom and pop' cafe. The salad showcased all my favorite comfort food flavors—sharp cheddar, black beans, buffalo wing sauce, cilantro. It's possible I've lost you by now but I promise it worked. Because this salad was B.K., Before Kosher, I now recreate it with those delicious fake Buffalo wings from MorningStar Farms and a few other complimentary ingredients. I also add one final ingredient that just takes it to a whole other level and will probably be the reason why it'll take me a bit longer to get back into those favorite skinny jeans but it's totally worth it. Scroll down for more.

### **What?**

1. Mixed lettuce
2. Shredded cheddar cheese (as much as you want)
3. 1/2 cup black beans
4. 1/2 cup canned corn
5. 1 diced tomato
6. 5 – 6 Fake Buffalo wings
7. Bunch of cilantro

### **How's That Now?**

Add items into bowl--it's a salad.



Food Besties—Cilantro y Avocado



Epic Salad – Please excuse the poor quality of picture. The lighting is terrible in our place at night.

Once your salad is all pretty you can eat it as is or . . . .  
you could add french fries.



That's right. French Fries.

French fries. I know, it's a little ridiculous but everything else in the salad was organic. Also, the cheese I use is GMO free and I'm pretty sure the avocados were local. Does that make it at all better? No? Well, it's delicious. I'm telling you. Delicious. Also, just to kick the healthy up to another level, I tend to put Ranch dressing and some Frank's Red Hot sauce on the whole thing and call it a day. I suggest you do the same. Enjoy!

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# When All Else Fails . . . Soup

Yesterday the hubs and I went to our first kids birthday party with our baby. It was filled with the usual—an insane amount of sugar, 4 year-olds running around with foam pirate swords, more sugar—it wasn't so bad. It was actually a beautiful day and I could relax in the fact that since my kid is too young to eat solids, I didn't have to deal with the bargaining and tears that come with trying to temper your child's sugar intake at a birthday party. At some point I swear I was in a Judd Apatow movie when I overheard a father ask his 18 month old, "Is that poop I smell? Did you poop your pants?" All in all, it was a lovely day. Then I got home and received word that my beloved dog, Teddy, isn't doing so well and the end might be near. Before there was hubby, before there was baby, it was just Teddy and me. As a twenty-something in Chicago, Teddy was my buddy. Every Saturday morning, when the weather allowed us, we would take incredibly long walks around the city. Sometimes I would stop in our favorite coffee shop, Central Bark, and I'd get a latte and he'd have a biscuit; it was really lovely. That little man went everywhere with me. When my grandfather unexpectedly passed away a few days before Thanksgiving, my cousin, his then fiancée (now wife), Teddy and I jumped in the car and drove to Louisville in a blizzard. At one point on that drive he ate dinner with us in a Burger King, B. K. (Before Kosher) as it was too cold to leave him in the car for a few minutes and too snowy and dangerous to drive while eating. He just sat there eating chicken fries (sorry PETA and other concerned pet-lovers. At least it was food. He was fine. Calm down.), happy as can be. He was truly my little buddy and I will be forever grateful for his companionship. When it came time for me to move myself to Israel for the year Teddy moved into my mom's place in Asheville, NC and lived the life of a retiree in the

mountains and he's been there ever since. He complained, he went on long walks, he slept a lot, he was happy. Now he's dealing with some yucky cancer and we're not sure how much longer it's going to be. Mom took him to the emergency vet yesterday in the evening and while I waited to hear the news of his condition I made soup. What else are you supposed to do when you need to be busy while waiting to hear about your furry friend? The soup decided upon was a roasted cauliflower soup. I found the recipe on Pinterest and tweaked/added a few things and I really feel the result was the taste and comfort I was looking for. The original recipe did not call for smoked paprika or dill but I really felt like the paprika and the dill would compliment the cheddar nicely while not overpowering each other. However, the paprika is definitely more of an 'ingredient' while the dill is more a garnish, if that makes sense. Also, it's important to taste and taste often with a heavy recipe. I ended up adding the squeeze of lemon at the end because it just needed a bit of acid to balance that cream. Anyway, I hope you find the soup just as comforting as I did while making it under happier circumstances.



Ted with some awesome friends the day after my

wedding.

Oh! Before I write out the ingredients/how-to I wanted to list all of Ted's nicknames given to him by myself and various friends throughout the years. You know, one last time.

1. Tedward
2. J. Tedgar Poover
3. Tedgar Allen Poo
4. Theo
5. Teddy Ruxpin
6. Teddykins



Ted and I in Chicago keeping each other warm.

## What?

- 1 head cauliflower, cut into florets
- 2 tablespoons oil
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 teaspoon thyme, chopped



- 3 cups vegetable broth
- 1 1/2 cups aged white cheddar, shredded
- 1 cup milk or cream
- 1 teaspoon smoked Spanish paprika
- juice of half a lemon
- A few sprigs of fresh dill for garnish

## **How's That Now?**

1. Toss the cauliflower florets in the oil along with the salt and pepper and arrange them in a single layer on a large baking sheet.
2. Roast the cauliflower in a preheated 400F oven until lightly golden brown, about 20-30 minutes.
3. Heat the oil in a large sauce pan over medium heat.
4. Add the onion and saute until tender, about 5-7 minutes.
5. Add the garlic and thyme and saute until fragrant, about a minute.
6. Add the broth and cauliflower, bring to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer, covered, for 20 minutes.
7. Puree the soup until it reaches your desired consistency with an immersion blender.
8. Mix in the cheese, let it melt and season with paprika.
9. Add salt and pepper to taste.
10. Mix in the milk and remove from heat – MAKE SURE TO TASTE AGAIN
11. Add squeeze of half a lemon to balance out the heaviness of the soup.
12. Garnish with dill.



Bottom of the delicious, delicious soup pot

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## Get Lazy with Whole Foods



I don't have a precious baby, well, other than my sweet puppy,

so it feels a little disingenuous to complain about my schedule. Just know that preparing any sort of meal during the week is hard. What I usually do, what I like to do, is prepare a huge meal on Sunday that can last us a few days of the work week. Then, I'll pull something together to get us through the last couple of days. I try to do that anyway. The older I get, the more respect I have for what my mother did when I was a kid. A new meal every night of the week. Oh, my Lord.

Last night on the way home from work, I stopped by the Whole Foods. I figured I'd buy a huge container full of tuna salad or some other such madness. Then? I walked through the meat department. I didn't want to spend my evening baking chicken or figuring out some sort of magical meat entrée.

Then I saw the fish. Minus tuna salad, I am not that much of a fish guy. I know I should be. Doctor Oz tells me every day that I need to make it happen with the fishes. Enter last night. You guys! The Whole foods has filets of Tilapia. Filets of Tilapia crusted with Parmesan. You guys. I mean...come on! I love Tilapia. So I got a couple filets.

Then? Since I was feeling super lazy, I found chopped cauliflower and cut (AND SPICED!) butternut squash. Shut your mouth! I love a roasted vegetable more than just about anything. I figured I'd throw all of this in the oven around the same time. As it turns out I'm a genius.

Nope. I don't know a thing about baking a fish filet. That's why Hashem invented the Internets. I preheated the oven to 450. I put those babies on a baking sheet. I tossed my cauliflower with a 3 tablespoons of garlic and a little olive oil. I put my pre-seasoned squash in a baking dish. I put the veggies in for about 25 minutes and the fish in for about 20. When the buzzer went off I looked like a champ.

My suggestion for tonight? Be lazy. Go see what Whole Foods

(or grocery story of your choice) can do to make your life easier. I mean don't you need to catch up on old episodes of Housewives of Beverly Hills? I know I do. l'shalom!