

QUICK BITE

Chappaqua

Healthy Feast To Follow Sugar Fest

In December, what we lacked in snow we made up for in blizzards of sugar: fudge, sugar cookies, fruit cake and candy canes. The calories took their toll, so in the first days of January, while the children polished off the last of the bonbons, my husband and I dutifully turned to light, nutritious food. Last week, the venerable gourmet outlet Susan Lawrence in Chappaqua, caterer to the svelte and well-manicured for more than 30 years, had just what I wanted.

Spa tuna strewn with a confetti of celery, tomato and spicy radishes (\$8.75 a pound) was blissfully free of mayonnaise. Low-fat chicken salad with green apple dice and dried cranberries and just a touch of curry (\$10.75) was as good as any full-fat chicken salad I've tasted. A salad of winter wheat berries and edamame beans with a mirin vinaigrette (\$11.75 a pound) was a bit on the whole-earthly side, but I felt virtuous eating it. Steamed French string beans with shallots (\$17.95 a pound) were sautéed in olive oil, not butter, and were excellent when reheated.

As a stand-in for dessert, the fresh fruit and berry salad (\$8.75 a pound) was beautiful to behold, the fruit ripe and flavorful even in midwinter. But, alas, a mascarpone and lemon cheesecake (\$22), decked out with glazed kumquats, cranberries and candied orange peel, proved too much to resist. This light-textured beauty won the ultimate accolade — “best cheesecake ever” — from an Italian-American friend who has never said no to cheesecake. Calories? We had happily lost count.

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