

Food / Daily Dish

Why does one of America's top pastry chefs want you to skip dessert?

By **Russ Parsons** • Contact Reporter

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Emily Luchetti's #dessertworthy aims for balance in sweets

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It might seem odd that Emily Luchetti, one of the legends in American pastry, is urging people to skip sweets. But it's all a matter of perspective.

Luchetti, who was the pastry chef at San Francisco's Stars and Farallon and now heads desserts at Marlowe, Park Tavern and the Cavalier there, doesn't want you to give up dessert entirely, she just wants you to eat it less frequently – and to eat better when you do partake.

To encourage that approach to sweets, she's starting a social media campaign called #dessertworthy. You can follow it on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

"I want people to eat healthy, eat right, and then have the occasional dessert," she says. "You don't have to give it up, you just have to put it in perspective."

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Specifically, Luchetti wants people to:

"To return dessert to its origin, which is to be consumed as an occasional treat and not an everyday indulgence.

"To build and consistently engage a community of digital supporters that are making active attempts to enjoy dessert in moderation.

“To raise awareness that consumers should be picky about their dessert intake. Enjoy dessert in moderation and/or earn sweet treats by combining them with healthy eating and fitness.

“To increase consumer knowledge of processed foods and hidden sugars.

“To be a resource for maintaining a #dessertworthy lifestyle through tips and reinforcements on digital communities.”

The movement grew out of her concern about the rising rates of obesity in the United States, and from constantly being asked “You’re a pastry chef, how come you’re not fat?”

It’s maddening, she says, because it assumes that overindulging is the only way to enjoy. “I wonder if they ask winemakers why they’re not alcoholics?” she says. “It’s not like I’m some health guru who is saying you should only eat super-healthy foods. Nobody wants to give up dessert and nobody should have to. You just need to keep it in perspective.

“Generally, when you look at pastry chefs, we’re in pretty good shape, because we have to learn to control it because we’re around it all the time.”

Luchetti sees #dessertworthy as a pushback against the all-or-nothing way of looking at diets, and particularly sweets.

“We want to work with kids and adults to teach them how to make desserts a part of a healthy living lifestyle,” she says. “Obesity is a major problem, there’s no question. But now they’re even talking about taking bake sales out of schools. You know, sugar is always going to be around and telling kids ‘No No No’ is just going to make it more attractive to them.”

It’s just a matter of being choosy where your sugar comes from.

“Generally, today I find that desserts are so sweet, especially the mass-marketed ones, that you don’t get much flavor,” Luchetti says. “And then you have to eat so much of them to feel full because you never get enough flavor to be satisfied. But if you have a really good truffle, one is enough.”

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