

Diane's Blog
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Not-So-New New Year's Resolutions

Why does it take a new year to begin resolutions? Does January 1st magically signal our psyche to begin anew? Or is it the debauchery and sugar overindulgence of the holidays that forces this reckoning? Knowing that we can't keep downing the cocktails and champagne, eating the ham and turkey plus leftovers, and lifting yet one more cookie off the holiday tray puts us in a somber, get-it-together mood once the clock strikes midnight and the New Year begins. OK. Maybe we wait until noon on New Year's Day to strike this peace accord with ourselves and willingly surrender our excesses.

For me, the reckoning began later. I arrived home on January 6 from a two-week family vacation in Argentina. New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, at Posada Puerto Bemberg near Iguazu Falls on the border between Argentina and Brazil, came and went with nary a thought to resolutions. I was having too much fun and it wasn't going to stop until I arrived home. I didn't dare step on the bathroom scale until the 9th of January, giving myself plenty of time to lose any water weight I may have retained from the flight home.

The truth hurts, though it could have been worse. An addition of a few pounds on my frame means my clothes are tight and my jeans barely zip. I was sure all that sweating in the northern Argentina jungles was worth a pound or two. Looks like not. I think those thick and juicy Argentinean steaks, along with bottles of Malbec (notice the plural), would require days of jungle trekking, and that we did not do.

So ... out comes the big soup pot. This is my diet plan. Using only a couple tablespoons of olive oil, just enough to slick the bottom of the pot, I sweat garlic, leeks, carrots and celery. To that I add low-sodium, fat-free chicken broth along with a large can of peeled, diced tomatoes, including the juice from the can. With the liquid at a simmer, I add one-inch chunks of butternut squash, zucchini, red bell pepper, and green beans. When those are fork tender, I toss in a can of drained and rinsed cannellini beans and a small handful of fresh herbs. After ten minutes of simmering I have a pot full of hearty, nutritious, low-calorie goodness that fills and warms me up, satisfies my taste buds, and keeps me going. It would probably be delightful with a glass of Malbec, but that would require another resolution, and my psyche just isn't ready for that.