

Transcript for The Who's Dat Phat Girl Podcast - With Brooke Hoover **SEASON 2 EPISODE #17- Ode to Salad**

Hey y'all, I'm Brooke Hoover. A Louisiana native, actor, writer and comedian. I've lost 100 pounds through diet and exercise or shall I say "lifestyle changes". My twenty year and counting health journey has taught me that just like taking a diet pill for weight loss, body positivity doesn't magically happen overnight. I'm working on re-gaining my self esteem and re-kindling my love affair with Cajun and Southern comfort food in a healthier way all the while juggling eating as clean as I can, re-establishing myself in the entertainment industry which, as we know, is historically fat phobic all the while showing my inner phat girl some love - that's phat with a PH - pretty hot and tempting. Let me tell y'all a tale or two...

I'm calling this episode an ODE TO SALAD (one of my first episodes is ODE TO KING CAKE.) Both deserve odes, in my humble opinion. I'm going to start this podcast episode with a little story about salad.

While I spent my younger years in Louisiana (at least during the school year), every summer we went to the mountains of North Carolina. About an hour west of the Asheville area - if you're a hippie or a wanna be hippie like me, you've most likely heard of it. It's near where Dirty Dancing was filmed. It's where I made my friends and family re-create scenes from Dirty Dancing. Well, it's a beautiful area of the country but it's out in the middle of nowhere.

My mom, my dad and some family friends were in town all went to brunch before my dad had a flight to a Shriner Convention in Toronto at a lil brunchie spot - brunch wasn't really a THING like it is now in the 90's but this place, The White Goose, was the OG of brunch. And, if you're curious, yes The White Goose restaurant actually had a WHITE GOOSE walking around in the pond with a fountain. He would run around and bite people if they got too close. The other geese were Canada geese. They were nice because they were Canadian. (All my geese connoisseurs understand I'm being a lil facetious here - because people always call the greyer ones, slightly calmer than White Geese "Canadian Geese" when in fact they're simply Canada Geese). I have REALLY digressed.

So, my dad says, "I just want to order something a little light before my plane ride. I'll have a salad." The salad arrives and my dad starts eating the salad and all of a sudden he goes "DAMNIT" and brings a napkin to his mouth. The white (goose) napkin turns blood red. His tongue is bleeding like a BEAST. Turns out my dad bit into a SEED. His salad had grapes in it and one of the grapes had a large SEED in it. My question is - who the hell puts grapes in a salad? The White Goose does, that's who.

So, since it's the 90's and we're in the middle of nowhere, there is no hospital to go to AND my dad has to catch a flight out of Asheville so we get a huge industrial pack of napkins from the server, a comped meal and we head to our car - trying to avoid

the White Goose himself from biting us on the butts on the way out - the commotion has really fired him up and he is honking and flapping.

My dad really could have used stitches. But surprisingly, unlike most traumatic events of my life, this salad fiasco has NOT turned me against salads.

I LOVE SALAD. Even though many peeps still view salad as almost a dietary punishment - like oh you are on a diet? Eat a salad? Cutting calories? Have a salad? You're a Karen and a hateful person? Have fun eating your salad, Karen. But no, salads are WONDERFUL.

I'd like to think it is all the wonderful delis in New York with a plethora of toppings to choose from to build your own salad but my very first memory of salad was actually in the early 80s.

My Momma (and almost every Momma back in the day) had one of those kits to make your own Italian dressing with the seasoning packet from Wishbone and you add oil and vinegar. Well she would mix it and then she'd hand it to me - I was half naked of course (I was three, that's how I rolled) and I would SHAKE it. Granted, I probably loved salad back then because Momma would throw some cheddar cheese cubes up in there. But, I had such fond memories of that Wishbone thing that I bought one at a Garage Sale in south Jersey a few years ago.

Momma would also bring me to this place called Ryan's which was a huge buffet and it had a great salad bar. It was the first time I ever saw Chickpeas and I pointed to them, kind of disgusted as Momma loaded them on top of her lettuce. Gross what's that? Momma was like, "Garbanzo beans, baby. They're good. Get some." I was grossed out by them but who knew years later, they'd be one of my favorite salad ingredient - whole or mashed up as hummus. What I REALLY had my eye on at the salad bar at Ryan's was the KALE - but it wasn't for the taking, y'all. It was ORNAMENTAL. And, I would say to Momma, "I want to eat that hearty green." And, Momma would say, "I know, baby but that's just for show." I snuck pieces of it occasionally when Momma wasn't looking. So I GUESS you could say I started the Kale trend as an 8 year old???

But despite my fond memories of salad when I was younger, when I officially dove into the South Beach LIFESTYLE Change when I was in my early 20's right after college graduation, if we'd be out and need to get food quick (again this is before gas stations carried make shift charcuterie and crudité boards and healthier options), the ONLY option at a fast food restaurant was a sad, sad salad. And, at the time, we were in the mountains of North Carolina which didn't have a Wendy's nearby - which was probably one of THE only fast food places with a somewhat interesting salad selection back in the 90's. Remember how they served you chili with one of their salads and called it taco salad? But, at Burger King or McDonald's all they had was grilled chicken on iceberg lettuce (and don't even get me started on Hardee's - they had NO salad options).

When I was first beginning my healthier eating journey and struggling to find something that was even quasi healthy not to mention healthy AND tasty, I kept telling Momma that they needed to invent a fast food place that was salad and greens based. I'd like to think I put the message out there for the Universe to bring us places like Cava and Sweetgreen - but I understand in the New York City / tri-state area here we are lucky to have plenty of those to choose from. Not quite as easy when I visit back home - EASIER than it was two decades ago but still, not super easy.

But, I think the reason why places LIKE Cava and Sweetgreen and all those salad bars (even if you have to kind of avoid thinking about the fact that they're called sneeze bars for a reason) have in common is THEY MAKE SALAD DELICIOUS. THEY MAKE SALAD SATISFYING ENOUGH TO BE THE FULL MEAL, TO BE THE PIECE DE RESISTANCE. THEY MAKE SALAD FUN.

And, that is the point of this episode. To talk about how we can change a mindset of a food that for so long was punishment food a party food!

A few years ago, when I went down to Louisiana, my aunt and I went out to eat a couple times. Every time we weren't out I would order a salad. My aunt was like, "Brooke all you eat is salads!" And, I said, "But I like them." And, I knew eating too much white rice or po-boy bread (both Louisiana staples) would lead to inflammation which makes all of my PCOS symptoms worse. So, salads weren't always about losing weight, they were always about feeling better.

But, there are some tricksters in the salad world that I want to talk with y'all about if you are on a journey to eat cleaner, healthier and avoid sugar.

So, avoid ANY salad additives that say, "candied". No, save your candied for actually eating a piece of candy that you're going to enjoy. Avoid candied walnuts or cranberries in a salad. Instead do regular raw walnuts and fresh berries (if you're a person who likes berries in your salad - I do not) I should mention this as a reminder from the Hoover's White Goose fiasco: If you're going to be crazy and add grapes, make sure they don't have seeds. Same goes for olives and pits.

I think what makes a great salad is obviously a bed of greens - I prefer something heartier such as romaine, butter lettuce, kale or actually my boyfriend Harry and his brother Satinder suggest cabbage - cabbage has a lot of nutrients, is more inexpensive than most greens and it can last longer in your fridge. I used to be a spring greens person BUT those tend to get slimy. Raw spinach and / or arugula are great but in my humble opinion, I think they should be mixed with a hearty green.

Then of course, you want crunch be it from nuts or seeds - again, avoid candied nuts or overly salted nuts if we are really going to get the best healthier bang for our buck. Then I suggest a pickled type of vegetable such as pickled carrots - which are

great for friends with PCOS actually for blood sugar regulation - or pickled onions or pickled radishes if you can handle the stench, I can. Then, I like a few cool but previously cooked (sheet pan dinner style, just do a little meal prep and cook them in advance with olive oil) such as broccoli or Brussels sprouts - it's hard to digest SO much raw roughage, y'all. And it's more FUN to have different tastes by having the roasted veggies in there. Then, a healthy fat up in there for your dressing - I like to mix lemon or vinegar with a little olive oil and some hummus to make kind of like a paste up on those hearty greens. I throw all of this into a big bowl and I shake it.

The KEY is to have everything already ready to go. I keep canned or jarred olives, hearts of palm and artichokes stocked UP. Because they're great inexpensive salad additions.

As far as salad dressings too - watch your sugars. Some of those can have over 8 grams of added sugar which to me is too much for a salad, especially for my PCOS friends who need to be more mindful of added sugar. Also, the more sugar you eat, the more sugar you're going to want to eat. My whole thing is, When you are eating healthy, why screw yourself over? I'd rather have an awesome salad with NO added sugar and a lil piece of cake instead of three salads a day each with two tablespoons of dressing that has 8 grams of added sugar per serving. Y'all feel me on this?

I just love salad, y'all. And, I noticed that Jennifer Garner made a little video a few weeks ago where she showed everyone how she makes her big ass salad. I'm like it doesn't take a rocket scientist to know how to make a salad, Jennifer Garner. But then I realized maybe she is just as passionate about a salad as I am. Also, have y'all ever watched the Kardashians inhale their salads? Well, if you haven't you've spent your time wisely. BUT, when I'm around my family I always like to say, "I INHALED THAT SALAD LIKE A KARDASHIAN." It always makes my uncle laugh which makes me laugh because it means my uncle watches Keeping Up With the Kardashians.

Salads aren't punishment, friends. In fact, let us all do our best to work on having a conversation with ourselves about our food. Instead of labeling a food like "Oh gosh I'm on a diet, I have to eat this. I can't eat this." Instead let's say, "THIS salad or THIS type of healthier food has a SHIT ton of nutrients and gives me sustained energy. YEE HAW" And on that same note, whilst eating a piece of cake (I keep talking about cake because my birthday is coming up and all I want is a vanilla Costco cake) let's not say to ourselves, "THIS IS SO BAD FOR ME. Need to put in extra time at the gym." Mindfulness around everything we eat is key but even more so than mindfulness (because that has lead me down the route of judging myself) let's just be KIND to ourselves when we eat what we eat. I mean, come on, it's hard enough to avoid splitting your tongue open on a grape seed or being bitten by a white goose while at brunch as it is. Let's not make it any more difficult on our PRETTY HOT AND TEMPTING selves.

Thanks so much for listening, y'all. It is my hope to inspire, uplift and entertain you with this Who's Dat Phat Girl podcast. So, if you're HUNGRY for more, you can book

me to speak or perform my solo show that inspired this podcast Phat Girl Costumes written by yours truly and directed by my best bud Brian Lady at your virtual or in person event. Please visit Brookehoover.com/fluffybuttproductions or email me at contactbrookehoover@gmail.com for more information. And, let's follow each other on instagram - I'm @Br00keH00ver and those O's are not the letter O but they're ZEROS. Not because I want to be a size 0 but because I guess I'm just so clever with my late 90s Yahoo! self

And, if you like this podcast, please give me a five star rating and write a review on Apple Podcasts and, please, most importantly, share with your friends, family and other people you may know who are as phat as we are - that's phat with a PH.

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