
In praise of the Luther Burger; [Chicagoland Final , CN Edition]

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Abstract (Document Summary)

Maybe that's because even though the diet message is received by the brain, it never gets to the stomach. Is the Luther Burger, for instance, just a gut bomb that you'll soon regret eating? No. It is a symbol of the indomitable human spirit. It's a reminder that the human being is a relentless eating machine, conditioned by thousands of years and by inescapable biology to consume and store massive amounts of calories.

Full Text (423 words)

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Warning: This editorial contains graphic descriptions of obscenely rich calorie-stuffed foods. Reading descriptions of such dishes may be dangerous to your diet. Reader discretion is advised.

Even as the food industry is spending millions to scrub those nasty trans fats from the nation's diet, there are contrarian voices among us that whisper of rebellion. Such a siren song is heard deep in what's called the Stroke Belt, in a Georgia eatery called Mulligan's. That's where they serve a delicacy called the Luther Burger.

The Luther Burger is a bacon cheeseburger served on a Krispy Kreme doughnut. It's loosely based on what was purported to be a favorite snack of R&B singer Luther Vandross. And yes, customers do order it. Maybe not in droves, but they do. There's also the Hamdog, a hot dog wrapped by a beef patty that's deep fried, covered with chili, cheese and onions.

All those who are earnestly studying ways to combat obesity in this country should take a trip to Mulligan's, as a safari into the heart of darkness. After years of dire warnings, the popularity of the Luther Burger and its fast-food ilk raise an important question for those who make a pretty good living scolding Americans about their eating habits: Is anyone listening?

Despite a personal plea for a national diet last year from Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson, and some scary statistics that later turned out to be exaggerated, the trends aren't encouraging.

Maybe that's because even though the diet message is received by the brain, it never gets to the stomach. Is the Luther Burger, for instance, just a gut bomb that you'll soon regret eating? No. It is a symbol of the indomitable human spirit. It's a reminder that the human being is a relentless eating machine, conditioned by thousands of years and by inescapable biology to consume and store massive amounts of calories.

If the feds, or anyone else, hope to make a dent in that manifest destiny, they'll have to be patient. They'll have to find a way to manage the dispute between stomach and brain.

Most Americans know that they should be eating a healthier diet. But savvy entrepreneurs are banking on the fact that there's no shortage of customers clamoring to kneel at the altar of, say, the Monster Thickburger, a 1,420-calorie cholesterol homage described by its architects at Hardee's as a "monument to decadence."

In almost everyone's diet, we'd gently suggest, there should be room for the occasional Luther Burger. That should serve the stomach right.

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