

your cake and hide it too. But how? Do they not eat their own food?

De Laurentiis' fans pose that question to her constantly. At a recent Q&A with 400 people in San Jose, Calif., the first questioner asked, "How do you stay so slender?" Everyone laughed. "How many of you want to [ask] that same question?" De Laurentiis wondered. At least 50 hands went up.

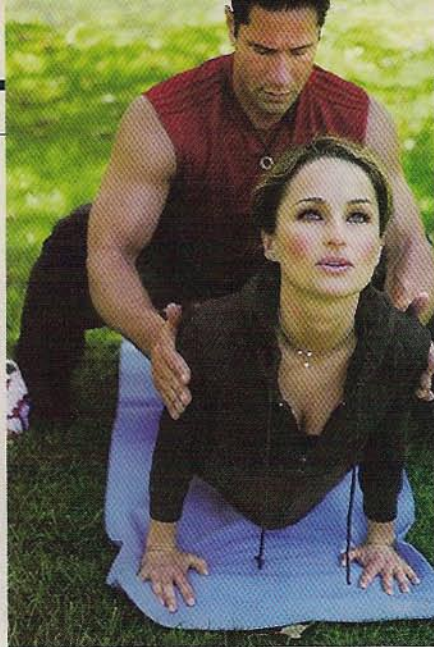
"Most of it is portion control," she answered. "Yes, I eat my own food. I do. But I don't eat a lot of it. And as you see in watching *Everyday Italian*, I take those little salad plates—you know, appetizer-sized plates—and that's the amount of food I eat... And I eat multiple meals throughout the day. And I do work out—a novelty, I know. And it's also—my mother's tiny—it's also partly genetics."

That's not quite the full story. De Laurentiis exercises three days a week with Joseph Rivera, a Taekwondo black belt whose other clients have included a *Playboy* cover model. She also regularly walks along the beach near her Pacific Palisades, Calif., home for as long as two hours, which she admits can get "really freakin' boring."

"Why don't you run?" I ask. "It would be much more efficient."

"Um, I have larger breasts than some," she says with a smile that hovers between Hollywood pride and knowing self-deprecation. "And running is not good for them.")

De Laurentiis does eat her own food when she's taping her show; she doesn't spit it out after a take or force herself to vomit, as several fans have asked. But she's not often having stuffed shells and mopped-up sauce. The day we spent together, De Laurentiis had a little bit of oatmeal with maple syrup for breakfast and a Caesar salad with chicken for lunch, followed by several small sweets from a cake shop. At dinner, she ordered three more salads—although, to be fair, one was served with a tuna fillet and another was shared with the table. And she did scoop up every bite of her dessert, an espresso granita with whipped cream. Still, De Laurentiis turned down nearly all the many alimentary offerings routinely presented to famous chefs by fans and job seekers. Except for two bites of chocolate someone made



SMALL BITES AND DEEP BREATHS
To keep her slim figure, De Laurentiis works with a trainer and takes long walks

for her, De Laurentiis ate nothing from the many gift platters. In Mischel's terms, she has acquired "self-regulatory competence": she can cool the gluttonous impulses activated in our lizard brains when we see food.

Goin can do it too. When we had dinner, she ate from the seven-course menu enthusiastically. But it was her first and only meal of the day. During a 5½-hr. plane ride that day, she had consumed only nuts.

Paradoxically, De Laurentiis and Goin learned self-regulatory competence by exposing themselves to food all the time. If they were Mischel's kids, they would be sitting with the cookie in the room every day—and not just any cookie but one rich in fat and professionally baked to perfection. Actually, both chefs were once just like Mischel's weak-willed subjects. In Goin's first restaurant job, she would stand in the walk-in and eat so much ice cream with strawberries that she couldn't touch dinner. De Laurentiis was even worse. As a student at Le Cordon Bleu Paris, she often ate only what she cooked. "Some days were just pastry days," she says. "So Giada made about 50 croissants. Well, Giada ate 50 croissants." Eventually she gained 15 lbs. "It's taken me some time to learn to control myself," she says. But she did learn; her weight has been stable, at 117 lbs., for several years. (Goin thinks she

weighs 135 but says she doesn't regularly weigh herself.)

In some of his experiments, Mischel suggested to kids that they pretend the cookie is just a picture of a cookie, not the real thing. Those kids were able to wait longer than the kids in control groups. (As one child said, "You can't eat a picture.") But De Laurentiis' and Goin's experiences suggest that we might try another strategy, one whose short-term risks may impart a long-term lesson: let your lizard brain eat all the cookies you want until you realize how awful you feel. De Laurentiis says she was "constantly sick" in Paris. Goin, who is often recognized by fellow chefs at top restaurants and then bombarded with extra food, describes the experience of gorging herself at some of those restaurants as "the worst feeling in the world... If you go to the French Laundry—the Napa Valley restaurant considered by some to be America's best—"it's like you want to stop a third of the way through because it's so amazing... By the end, you're like, 'Uncle. Stop.'" Not surprisingly, both De Laurentiis' and Goin's portions are somewhat smaller than what most chefs serve. Their books offer chicken recipes that specify tiny 3-oz. (De Laurentiis) and 5-oz. (Goin) morsels of fowl per guest.

Still, nearly everyone has eaten to the point of vomiting, yet many don't learn portion control. After their youthful bingeing, De Laurentiis and Goin intuited another important lesson: that some "cookies" were far better than others. "If I am really starving, I will eat airplane food," says Goin, grimacing. "But I would rather not eat the macadamia chicken on the airplane and [instead] get to have that super-good bread slathered with lardo," she adds, referring to the whipped cured pork fat served at the Manhattan restaurant Del Posto, where we were dining. Which suggests a new kind of diet plan: eat like these chefs. Become a food snob. You'll experience important culinary revelations: Those Entenmann's Softee Frosted Donuts in the vending machine? They're horrible. Gummy on the outside, dry on the inside. It's prison food. Wait instead for a nice plate of chicken Tetrazzini when you get home. That is, a nice salad plate's worth. —With reporting by Alice Park



COCOA
As a hot drink or dark chocolate, cocoa is high in flavonoids and antioxidants and has been shown to lower blood pressure