



Lydia D. Castillo

## In My Basket

Sustainable lifestyle is living while making sure that others live as well. Thus, we need to protect the environment, we need to replant trees and we need to guard against desecration of nature.

## What is 'sustainable' lifestyle?

We have heard the phrase quite often. So one day, when we were at lunch with our friend Chit, who is a dedicated environmentalist, we asked her what 'sustainable lifestyle' is all about. It is living while making sure that others live well as well. Thus we need to protect the environment, we need to replant trees and we need to guard against desecration of nature.

Echostore is one example of how people extend the life, so to speak, of otherwise discarded things, as supermarket plastic bags become ladies' accessories, scrap paper become writing pads, etc. Chit, as co-chair of the Philippine Coffee Board, makes sure that coffee planters are protected (from unfair competition) and assisted in their farming activities. Needless to say, Chit is into healthy eating. With her partners, she has opened Le Bistro, a casual café offering light meals, coffee, beverages and other refreshments. Thus you can get spinach dip with crostinis, capers and olives pizza, putanesca with fresh vegetables and/or sardines in *pan de sal*, the bread is of jumbo size. Over there, coffee is how coffee should be. Le Bistro is on the Streetside of Forbes Tower on Valero street, Makati city.

Because they were new in the supermarket we frequent, we bought this four-piece pack of salmon medallions (P149), each the size of a regular hamburger. They have been pre-seasoned with lemon and pepper. We grilled two of them for dinner. Unfortunately while no salt was mentioned in the package, they turned out to be very salty. So what do we do with the rest? We checked our refrigerator and we found more leftovers. The resulting dish is a pasta sauce. We had the following – the above-mentioned salmon (two pieces), about 30 gms of capers, a small can of whole mushrooms, a half bottle of pesto sauce and our usual crushed garlic plus olive oil. We minced the salmon and cut the mushrooms into small pieces. After heating the olive oil, we sautéed the garlic, added the salmon and then all the other ingredients – using only a tablespoon and a half of the pesto sauce. We also added the liquid from the mushrooms. After simmering for a few minutes, we emptied a can of evaporated milk on the mixture, mixed it well and brought it to full boil. Black ground pepper was added. Great!

Commendable – Jollibee's policy on senior citizens' cards. They extend the discount even on promo meals, which some of their competitors don't do.

A less hectic weekday led us to Market! Market! which, even on a rainy day, was crowded with shoppers, hamburger and chicken fanatics and mere onlookers. If you are into gardening, this is the place to get fertilizers and flower boosters which are often not available in some garden shops. The Peter powder for flowering plants is sold at P95 a pack. Urea can also be bought from one of the stores along Concha Cruz in BF Parañaque.

Back to Market! Market! We decided to check the Metro Supermarket on the basement level of the department store. We noted a big increase in the food stalls with all sorts of snacks and small meals along the front entrance. They have set up tables and chairs where shoppers can enjoy their food, without being elbowed or bothered. Back of the grocery are more outlets including Dizons, where mangoes are at P110 a kilo.

Inside, the Best and Fresh brand also tags mangoes at the same price, while native melon goes for P70 a piece, papaya at P36 a kilo and *saba* (very good kind) for P36 as well. From the vegetable section, fresh basil is tagged at P200 a kilo, Romaine lettuce at P100. Apparently they have two suppliers of Taiwan pechay, one sells for P90 a kilo and the other P149. Quality-wise they are the same. Salad tomatoes, really big, red and firm, were at P150 a kilo. We found a new bread maker, MC from Cubao, Quezon City. Their selection includes garlic, pesto rolls, pizza crust and bagels. Las Palmas is also an unfamiliar label of chilli sauces, from P74 to P172. Rody and Ruby offer cooked food, such as *embutido*, P170 and *rellenong bangus*, P160. Meat supplier Garcia's sells pork face for P95 a kilo, special ribs at P180, *kasim* at P125, T-bone at P350, ground beef at P190. The pre-seasoned beef tonkatsu we got for P780 a kilo is quite tough and bland.

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