

Perfecting the Menu

By: IndigoRho

From the modest cockpit of the *Anitra* there was a gorgeous view of the watery planet below, from swirling clouds to blue oceans, not to mention lush untouched isles. Chef Ezra Feder had made an excursion to the remote planet in search of unique ingredients for the restaurant he was planning to open soon, which had been an astounding success—at least until his ship's engines had failed in orbit. Though the rest of the systems were in perfect working order, the mulard duck would have to wait a few days for a tow to escort him back to civilization for repairs. Fortunately he knew the perfect way to pass the time.

After making sure everything was running smoothly in the cockpit Ezra left, traveling down the rather short corridor of the ship to its kitchen. Most ships as small as the *Anitra* tended to only have a simple food replicator and a small table to eat at, but Ezra had desired something far more substantial. Aside from the usual replicator he had a full range of high quality appliances and storage, enough to handle more diners than the ship actually had room for. Of course, there was only one mouth to feed at the moment.

The chubby duck began grabbing equipment and ingredients, his slick white bodysuit reflecting the lights just as well as the steel pots did. His official menu was still somewhat incomplete, so the wait for repairs would give Ezra plenty of time to perfect at least a few dishes, maybe even all if he completely dedicated himself to cooking.

First on the agenda was a filet made from a new species of fish he'd retrieved from the planet. The duck expertly began preparing a half-dozen variations, some of which were only the slightest bit different. He darted from one range to another, able to keep up with it all only thanks to years of practice. Soon there were six finished plates of filets neatly arranged on the table.

Ezra quietly dug in. The dishes weren't finished off individually, the chef instead taste-testing bits of each sporadically, desiring as immediate a comparison between the flavors as possible. He grinned as he savored his wonderful creations, making sure to not leave a single bite uneaten as he contemplated which of the six meals were the best fit for his menu, or if further tweaking was necessary.

The chef's tiny belly rounded out a little as he consumed the fish, the bulge impossible to hide while wearing such a skin-tight bodysuit. Despite his size Ezra was easily capable of scarfing down excessive quantities of food, though the occurrences were few and far between. He didn't particularly care about maintaining his physique, and as soon as the last plate was clear the rather stuffed duck proceeded to swiftly start on more.

For hours and hours Ezra did nothing but cook and eat, cook and eat. Appetizers, entrees, desserts, sides...the duck worked on whatever suited his mood at the moment. Little-by-little his middle began to swell, turning into a taut dome, then a basketball, then a beach ball. His bodysuit diligently stretched to contain his growing gut as he continued stuffing himself, never feeling tight just the duck himself was never feeling full.

Ezra's frenzied dance around the kitchen gradually slowed as his round middle grew more unwieldy, but the duck still managed to avoid knocking anything over, even as he became nearly too wide to comfortably fit between the stoves and the kitchen island. Only when Ezra's huge belly started spilling over the counter did he reluctantly put his cooking on hold, slowly shimmying out into the open.

Multiple dishes had been finalized thanks to Ezra's tireless efforts, and the dedication showed on his waistline. The duck's middle was comically distended, so massive he was forced to balance it in both wings to prevent himself from falling over. Feeling the weight of all the food in his stomach didn't make the chef wince or frown, though, but smile in triumph. He'd made wonderful progress on the menu, all thanks to being stranded; perhaps the breakdown wasn't so bad after all.

Exhausted, Ezra carefully waddled to his personal quarters to go to sleep, but not before taking a digestion aid. There was too much work left to be done for Ezra to waste the next day too stuffed to leave bed, and the aid would ensure everything he'd eaten would be fully digested by morning. He fell onto his bed with a content sigh, gently rubbing his swollen middle as he drifted off.

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As Ezra slept his boulder of a belly began to shrink—but the rest of him grew. His arms and legs got doughier, his face rounder. More defined moobs began to form, along with thicker love-handles and a wider butt. Even once his feast was digested his gut still jutted out further than before. The duck was rather plump now, having gained enough weight that acquaintances would likely do a double-take if they saw him.

When morning came and Ezra nudged himself awake, though, the duck paid no heed to his new girth. Ezra certainly wasn't oblivious to the gains—he felt the extra jiggle in his step, saw the larger curve of his middle, heard the louder-than-usual grumbling of his stomach. He simply cared far more about continuing the work on his menu than something as trivial as getting fatter.

While the previous day had been dedicated to perfecting individual dishes, Chef Ezra was now ready to start experimenting with just how well his creations complimented each other. He ordered the food replicator to create a list of every possible combination of the dishes he'd come up with, and with a single command three plates materialized in the replicator and slid onto the table. The duck finished his sample meal fairly quickly, taking mental notes of which flavors were too prominent across the selection and what felt lacking. Then he ordered the second combination right away.

Plate after plate after plate were cleared as Ezra tested the many possibilities of his menu. His belly was swelling with every devoured combination, a round ball spreading over the duck's lap and into the table. Just like the day before he ignored his middle and the ridiculous amount of food he was consuming, his focus exclusively on the job at hand. With the emptied plates returned to the replicator the duck's growing gut was the only way to tell how much he was consuming, but that was more than enough.

Each finished meal saw Ezra inching his chair back a little more to make room for his sizable belly, and after a while it was easier for the duck to balance his plates on his middle than reach for the increasingly-distant table. The inconvenience didn't cause him to slow down one bit. In just over an hour Ezra's gut was already larger than it had been after the previous session, mainly thanks to the fact he was eating non-stop with no breaks to actually cook.

Eventually the duck was so stuffed his wings could barely brush up against the edge of the table. Rather than take a break, though, Ezra simply changed seats. With care the chef slowly rolled off of his chair and onto his round belly, using it like a giant beanbag. Now there was nothing interfering with his taste-testing.

Ezra picked up his pace, devouring whole three-course meals in the time most would take to finish a single dish. He was still paying keen attention to how well everything went together, of course, but there was so much food to go through and so little time. The duck was growing bigger and bigger, rising atop his expanding belly as it spread outwards across the floor. His stretchy bodysuit handled his dramatic increase in girth as easily as it had when he'd woken up, showing no signs of strain or tears.

The feasting continued until Ezra had sampled every last combination possible on his menu, and by then he was utterly immobile. Ezra's gut resembled a massive, boulder-sized snowball thanks to his outfit. He was as wide as he was tall, stuffed full with as much food as an average person ate in a whole month. Even if there'd been someone there to roll them he'd have never fit through the doorway of the kitchen, or the corridor itself.

However, Ezra's thoughts were solely on reviewing his notes. The engorged duck rested on the floor—beached by his own belly—and happily considered what adjustments to the menu would be

necessary, which dishes should be removed, and what could potentially take their place. After all, he had plenty of time to think as he waited to digest all he'd consumed...

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Two days later a tow ship finally arrived at the location of the crippled *Anitra*. A husky crew member stood waiting at an airlock as the two vessels docked, the canine silently repeating an apology over and over in his head. They'd been a day later than promised thanks to miscommunication on the company's end, and the husky was worried he'd get an earful from the stranded client despite not personally being to blame.

As soon as the airlock doors opened the husky stepped forwards to greet the awaiting duck. "Mr. Feder I apologize for the delay we...uh."

The picture the husky received of the client had shown a smiling, white-and-black duck who looked rather slim, but the person now standing before him was undeniably different. He was smiling—and certainly a duck—but he was *anything* but slim. His white bodysuit clung tightly to his blubbery belly, accentuating the curves and doing nothing to disguise his size. The duck's face was considerably rounder and his wings and legs thicker. He must've weighed over three hundred pounds at least, probably more.

"Oh no worries, I appreciate the free time I had to work on perfecting my restaurant's menu!" Ezra replied cheerfully before giving his gut an unsubtle slap with a wing.

The husky's gaze locked onto Ezra's jiggling middle and he blushed. "I...um, I see!" He instantly regretted his words, realizing how blunt they'd been far too late.

Fortunately Ezra seemed amused rather than offended. "Well everyone says you can't trust a skinny chef after all!" he bellowed, wobbling his belly even more than before. "Though on a related note, I'd love to cook for you and the rest of the crew on our journey home. Getting some outside opinions on my menu would be very beneficial."

The husky simply nodded. "We, we'd be honored!" he replied, nervously thinking of how fat the duck had gotten from the very menu he was offering them. He wondered if Ezra wouldn't be the only one waddling out of the ship by the time they returned...