

BLUE ZONES®

FOOD GUIDELINES

Centenarians in the original Blue Zones® areas don't diet or count calories to stay lean and healthy. They simply eat whole foods each day, mostly plants. By adopting some of the healthy-eating principles that define a Blue Zones lifestyle, you too can live longer, better.

95% PLANT-BASED



People in Blue Zones areas have a diet that is 95% plant-based. Fruits, vegetables, beans, tofu, lentils, nuts, and seeds are rich with disease-fighting nutrients and the cornerstone of their diets. When they eat meat, fish, eggs, or dairy, they treat it as a condiment rather than the feature item. Try to gradually reduce consumption of animal-based foods to 5% of your intake each day.

WHOLE FOODS ARE BETTER



People in Blue Zones areas eat whole foods. Whole foods are not processed in factories—they're made with ingredients that are recognizable as coming from the earth, like rice, corn, soy, fruits, and vegetables, or prepared food like tofu or manna bread. Strive to cut processed foods and incorporate more whole foods in your diet by checking the ingredients on the box for things you don't recognize.

LIMIT MEAT



People in Blue Zones areas eat meat about once a week and typically their servings are no larger than a deck of cards. Their diets do not include processed meats like hot dogs, bacon, and sausages. Instead, they favor free-range chicken and family-farmed pork or lamb. Try to reduce portions of meat in each meal so they are more in line with those eaten in Blue Zones areas (the size of a deck of cards), or pick one day each week to go meatless and work on expanding from there.

FAVOR FISH



Fish is an important part of the Blue Zones diet, and it's healthy to eat a serving about the size of your palm daily. Wild-caught fish that fall in the middle-of-the-food-chain like sardines, trout, snapper, cod, and anchovies are good choices. Predator fish, such as tuna, swordfish, and shark should be avoided due to potentially high levels of mercury.

LITTLE DAIRY



People in Blue Zones areas enjoy small amounts of products made from sheep and goat's milk—especially yogurt—a few times a week. To eat like a Blue Zones centenarian, try incorporating dairy products made from sheep and goat's milk in your diet, but limit the serving to the size of two ice cubes.

FOOD GUIDELINES

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OCCASIONAL EGG

People in Blue Zones areas typically eat an egg every other day, or 3 per week. Favor eggs from cage-free, pastured chickens just like the Blue Zones centenarians.



BEANS FOR LONGEVITY

Beans are an important source of protein in the Blue Zones areas with centenarians eating at least one cup of cooked beans daily. Whether you choose black beans, pinto beans, garbanzo beans, lentils, fava beans, navy beans, or peas, try including more beans in your meals. If you buy them in a can, try to avoid brands with added sugars, salts, and chemicals.



SNACK ON NUTS

Nuts are a healthy source of fat and help you feel full. Commonly eaten nuts include almonds, pistachios, walnuts, hazelnuts, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, Brazil nuts, and peanuts. To eat like Blue Zones centenarians, eat a small handful of nuts daily. Mix it up by trying different types of nuts so you don't tire of them, but avoid sugar and salt coatings.



BEST BREADS

People in Blue Zones areas eat very little bread, but when they do, they predominantly eat sourdough. Unlike other breads made from white flour, sourdough bread doesn't cause spikes in blood sugar. Substitute sourdough or 100% whole-grain bread for white bread, and be mindful of your serving size.



SLASH SUGAR

People in Blue Zones areas don't eat foods with added sugar. Instead, they favor foods that are naturally sweetened with fruit and honey. Added sugar is known to increase inflammation, putting the body at greater risk for developing disease. To eat like a Blue Zones centenarian, read labels and purchase foods with little or no added sugar. Strive to consume less than 24g of added sugars daily, and replace sugar with honey for sweetening beverages or baking.



SIMPLE BEVERAGES

Blue Zones centenarians typically drink coffee at breakfast, tea in the afternoon, wine at 5pm, and water all day. To live to be 100, keep your beverages simple and avoid sugary beverages like soda and fruit juices.