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## Longevity Lab: Eats and Feats



Tricia Silverman, RD, MBA  
Registered Dietitian, Fitness Instructor, Wellness Coach  
Tricia Silverman Wellness  
tricia@triciasilvermanwellness



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## 10 Global Longevity Factors for Optimal Health and Aging

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### 1. Eat lots of vegetables and when steaming or boiling, consume the leftover water.

- Vegetables are lightly steamed and the water they are cooked with is consumed  
- Hunza
- Vegetables eaten raw or cooked in small amount of water  
- Abkhazia



Drink Vegetable Tea!

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### Hunza, Pakistan

- Isolated for almost 2000 years
- Known for rich soil
- Organic agriculture, pesticides not used
- Known for their agility and strength in climbing mountains and carrying loads
- Formed terraced gardens, one of the wonders of the world
- Known to be resourceful

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### Apricots

- In US, grown primarily in California May-September
- Contain Vitamin A, Vitamin C and fiber
- A Study of over 50,000 nurses found highest vitamin A intake reduced risk of developing cataracts nearly 40%.
  - Vitamin A high in orange/yellow fruits and vegetables
  - 3 or more servings of fruit per day may lower your risk of age-related macular degeneration



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### 2. Eat vegetables and fruits in season when possible. Garden if you can and/or try to purchase local foods from farmstands and farmers' markets.



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### 3. Consume small amounts of nuts and seeds throughout the day.

1. Peanuts and sunflower seeds are often the most inexpensive, but do try to get a variety of nuts
2. Eat nuts and nutbutters unsalted and raw or dry-roasted

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### Predimed Study

- 3 Groups
  - Mediterranean diet supplemented with extra virgin olive oil
  - Mediterranean diet supplemented mixture of nuts
  - Low fat diet
- Mediterranean Pattern:
  - lower blood pressure
  - improved cholesterol
  - decreased insulin resistance
  - decreased inflammation



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### Lyon Heart Study

Studied diets of two groups post heart attack

- Group One: Mediterranean style diet + omega 3's given to one group
- Group Two: Control group: no specific diet followed

Results: 50% to 70% lower risk of recurrent heart disease in Mediterranean group

-Circulation, 2001

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### Mediterranean Diet, Longevity, Cancer and Alzheimer's

- Higher adherence to Mediterranean diet associated with lower overall mortality and specifically lower death rates from cancer and heart disease
  - Epic Study on Elderly in Greece
- Those eating Mediterranean diet 38% less likely to develop Alzheimer's disease.
  - Participants ate higher intakes of salad dressing, nuts, fish, tomatoes, poultry, cruciferous vegetables, fruits, and dark and green leafy vegetables and a lower intake of high-fat dairy products, red meat, organ meat, and butter
    - Archives of Neurology 2010

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### 4. Limit your red meat consumption. Eat more beans. Eat more fish.

Vegetarians eating up to 1 serving of fish per day live the longest

– Adventist Health Study 2

Meat eaters likely to

- weigh more and eat more soda, desserts and refined grains
- die sooner



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### Red Meat



Associated with cancer, heart disease, earlier mortality  
-Replace with fish, beans, poultry

“One daily serving of unprocessed red meat (about the size of a deck of cards) was associated with a 13% increased risk of mortality, and one daily serving of processed red meat (one hot dog or two slices of bacon) was associated with a 20% increased risk.”

-2012 study, Harvard School of Public Health

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## 5. Decrease processed food consumption. Try fruit when craving something sweet.

1. Decrease added sugar and salt
2. Limit crackers and choose whole grain options like Triscuit/Ak-mak
3. Switch to whole grains:
  - Examples: Oatmeal, barley, brown rice



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## 6. Stay active and move your body regularly.

Yoga

Tai chi

Low impact exercise

Walking

Gardening/Working the land

Dance

Connect with nature (hiking, exercising outdoors)



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## 7. Stay connected to family and friends.

1. Make new connections if you are isolated
2. Volunteering is a great way to do this

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## Social Support

- Social groups important: Moais



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## 8. Aim to be happy and cheerful.

- When feeling down, help others
- Have a purpose
- Random acts of kindness
  - Make something for someone
  - Cook something for someone
  - Pay for someone's coffee/tea
- Exercise
- Research shows that as long as they are in fairly good health, 70 year olds throughout the world are on average as happy and mentally healthy as 20 year olds. -2008, Social Science and Medicine

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## Purpose

- May protect cognition
- May help you live longer
- What is your purpose?
  - Teaching/sharing wisdom, friendship, kindness
  - Visiting others (friends, those in nursing homes)
  - Volunteering
  - Watching kids, grandkids, checking in on others
  - Listening/helping others/lending a hand

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## 9. Minimize exposure to chemicals.

- **Seventh Day Adventists avoid coffee alcohol and cigarettes**
- **Use more natural cleaners**
  - Open up windows and get fresh air in house when cleaning
- **Use more natural products on your skin**

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## Adventist Health Studies From Loma Linda, California Find Keys to Longevity

- Eat a plant-based diet with only small amounts of dairy or fish (vegetarianism adds 2 years to life)
- Do not smoke
- Maintain a medium body weight (Vegetarians often weight 16-32 pounds lighter than meat-eating counterparts)
- Eat a handful of nuts 4-5 times per week (adds 2 years to life)
- Do regular physical activity (adds 2 years to life)

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## 10. Embrace spirituality.

- **Seventh-day Adventists have a “sanctuary in time” on Saturdays**
  - They avoid tv, movies, and other distractions, go to church and join others or potluck lunches
  - Take a nature walk
    - Sunshine
    - Fresh air
- **Okinawan gods and ancestors play a role in their spirituality**

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## Traits of Okinawan Elders

- Healthy arteries
- Low risk for CVD and stroke
- Low risk for many cancers
- Strong bones
- Sharp minds
- Slim bodies, low body fat
- Natural menopause
- Low stress levels
- Excellent psychospiritual health
- High levels of activity

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## Lifestyle Factors

- **Lifestyle practices:**
  - Diet
  - Regular exercise
  - Moderate alcohol
  - No smoking
  - Stress-minimizing outlook
  - Combined eastern/western healthcare



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## Okinawan Takeaway: Hara hachi bu

- **Only eating until 80% full**



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## Ayakaru: Successful aging celebrated

- “I came here to Ayakaru you.”
  - Folk belief that by touching an elder, you can enjoy good luck, health, and longevity

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## Okinawan Power Foods



- Imo, Sweet Potato, rich in carotenoids, flavonoids
- Bitter Melon, may lower blood sugar, may protect against cancer, used in stir-fries with tofu, eggs, canola oil, and other ingredients
- Konnyaku, from yam, gelatinous cake or noodle form, rich in fiber used as supplement or in noodle dishes or as a snack. Treats constipation and may lower cholesterol

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- Burdock, root vegetable high in fiber and low in calorie density, may have anti-inflammatory properties, may help reduce liver damage
- Daikon (Japanese radish) low calorie density, good source of vit c, has calcium, can be used in salads, soups and stir-fries. May help prevent ulcers.

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- Sea Vegetables:
  - Wakame, good source of fiber, potassium, magnesium, used in soups (miso) and cold salads, mixed with soba noodles
  - Kombu, mineral-rich, used to make soup stock and can be simmered with other vegetables

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- Soy: High in plant estrogens. May lower cholesterol, may help reduce hot flashes, may lower risk for cancer (Caution with thyroid issues and breast cancer: talk to your MD)
  - Sources: Edamame Beans, Soy milk, tofu, soy nuts
- Turmeric: an anti-inflammatory herb, antioxidant, potential cancer-fighter
  - Okinawans: use as a curry spice for soups chicken and fish, add it to tea



## Tea



- Sanpin or Jasmine Tea
  - Most popular drink of Okinawan elders
  - Made from green tea leaves mixed with jasmine flowers
    - May lower cholesterol
    - May contribute to longevity
  - Source of flavanoids, may protect against heart disease and cancer

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## Traditional Abkhazian, Vilcabamban, and Hunzan diets

- Eat little meat
- Most of diet is from plant foods
  - Cornmeal porridge and salad for breakfast in Abkhazia
- Low salt consumption
- Don't use sugar or processed food
- 0% obesity
- Low calorie diet
- Low fat, high carb diet
  - Protein is lower than American diet

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## Abkhazia: Spectacular Health in Seniors noted by physicians in 1900's

- Unusual rates of longevity
- Mentally healthy and outgoing
- Good hearing and eyesight
- Physically fit
- Able to travel up and down steep terrain with ease
- No retirement, seniors work regularly

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## Vilcabamba Takeaway

- Healing power of walking: "Each of us has two doctors– the left leg and the right leg,"- a saying in Vilcabamba according to *Healthy at 100* by John Robbins



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## Costa Rican Longevity Factors

- Have a sense of purpose
- Drink hard water
- Stay connected to family
- Eat a light dinner
- Stay social
- Keep doing physical chores
- Get some sensible sun
- Get your sleep
- Keep the faith
- Be positive
- Eat for longevity...



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## Longevity Food List

**Beverages:** coffee, green tea, herbal tea, red wine, water

**Dairy:** feta cheese, goat and sheep milk, pecorino cheese

**Fruit:** apples, apricots, avocados, bananas, berries, figs, grapes, plantains, bitter melon, cherries, lemons, melons, mulberries, oranges, papayas, peach palms, pears, persimmons, plums, tomatoes, watermelon, and others

**Grains:** barley, buckwheat, corn, cornmeal porridge, whole-grain bread, brown rice, maize nixtamal, Job's tears, millet, oatmeal, quinoa, wheat

**Herbs and Spices:** garlic, mint, Mediterranean herbs such as parley, basil, oregano, dill, bay leaves, rosemary & thyme, milk thistle, turmeric

**Nuts and Seeds:** almonds, beechnuts, flax, hazelnuts, pecans, sunflower seeds, walnuts, and others

**Oils:** Extra virgin olive oil, canola, apricot kernel oil, sesame oil, sunflower oil

**Protein:** soy milk, tofu, beans, (black, black-eyed peas, chickpeas, fava, lentils, others), some fish, eggs, poultry, little meat

**Sweetener:** honey (see fruit!)

**Vegetables:** artichoke, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, eggplant, fennel, garlic, greens (dandelion, lettuce, mustard greens, purslane, spinach, etc.) okra, onions, potatoes, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, radishes, seaweed (kombu, wakame), shiitake mushrooms, squash, tomatoes, turnips, yams, yucca, and others

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## Recreating Blue/Longevity Zones

**Albert Lea, Minnesota, California Beach Cities: Manhattan Beach, Hermosa Beach, and Redondo Beach,**

**North Karelia, Finland**

**Changes:** people joined walking moais, less people smoking, cooking with oil instead of butter, decrease in salt intake, increase in vegetables

**Results:** cholesterol reduction, weight loss, decrease in heart disease death rate, increase in longevity

**Source:** *The Blue Zones Solutions* by Dan Buettner

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## Rapid Fire Recipe: Spaghetti Squash



- Spaghetti Squash is a low calorie yummy vegetable that can be used as a lower-carb pasta. Before use, spaghetti squash can be stored outside of the refrigerator for up to 3 months. It can be stored in the refrigerator for 1-2 weeks before cooking. A squash around 3 pounds yields around 5 cups of edible "spaghetti."

### Comparison:

- Spaghetti Squash, per cup: 40 calories, 10 grams of carbs
- Pasta, per cup: 220 calories, 43 grams of carbs

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## Steps for quick yummy spaghetti squash:



1. Rinse well. Pierce spaghetti squash in several places throughout squash. Place on microwave-safe dish. Cook in microwave for 7.5 – 10 minutes, turn then cook in microwave for another 7.5 – 10 minutes until tender.
2. Cut straight through lengthwise (shown at upper left).
3. Scoop out seeds and fibrous strands and discard (shown at middle left).
4. Take a fork and scrape the spaghetti strands into a bowl (shown at lower left). Squash should be tender and easy to scrape...if not add a little water to one half, place the other half back on top, and cook for a few more minutes in the microwave until tender.

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5. One of my favorite quick toppings per cup of spaghetti squash is 1 tsp extra virgin olive oil, 1 tsp of pecorino Romano cheese (I love Trader Joe's brand) and a sprinkle of the following: basil, garlic powder, onion powder, and oregano.



Calories per cup: 95

You can also top with your favorite sauce and/or a sprinkle of feta (Trader Joe's has a great Greek feta). Add beans such as kidney beans or cannellini beans to make it more of a meal.

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## Additional Resources

### Books:

- *Blue Zones*, by Dan Buettner
- *The Blue Zones Solution*, by Dan Buettner
- *Healthy at 100*, by John Robbins
- *The Okinawa Program* and *The Okinawa Diet Plan*, by B. Wilcox, C. Wilcox, M. Suzuki
- *Hunza Land* by Allen Banik and Renee Taylor

### Websites for Recipes:

- [www.oldwayspt.org](http://www.oldwayspt.org)
- [www.whfoods.org](http://www.whfoods.org)
- <https://www.bluezones.com/recipes/>

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