

BLUE ZONES POWER 9

PLANT SLANT

PUT A PLANT SLANT ON YOUR PLATE

Centenarians in Blue Zones® areas across the world don't eat a lot of meat or processed foods. But they do eat plenty of beans, whole grains, and veggies, which are usually grown in their own gardens. Sardinian shepherds eat flatbread made from wheat, while Nicoyans in Costa Rica serve corn tortillas with each meal. Beans, whole grains, and garden vegetables are at the heart of longevity diets. A Plant Slant diet is also one of the Power 9®—shared lifestyle habits of those living in the original Blue Zones areas helping them live longer, better.



VEGGIE TALES

If you are trying to eat healthier by munching on more vegetables, you're not alone. Veggies were rated number one among the foods targeted by those striving to eat healthier, according to a Tufts University study.

Healthy Eating on the Run

We all know that watching what and how much we eat helps us feel better and prevents costly health conditions and illnesses. We also know that actually enjoying nutritious and delicious meals on a busy schedule is easier said than done. Use these quick tips to make healthier choices when you're in a hurry:

- Skip the fries and go for a baked potato or side salad. Forget the butter and sour cream and top your potato with salsa or broccoli instead.
- Boost nutrition by adding tomatoes, lettuce, peppers, and other veggies to your sandwich. Choose whole grain bread and protein-packed options like peanut butter or hummus.
- At the salad bar, pile on the dark leafy greens, carrots, peppers, and other fresh vegetables. Avoid high-fat dressings and nutritionally questionable add-ons like croutons, bacon bits, and processed meats.
- Pass up on the all-you-can-eat specials, buffets, and unlimited salad bars. If you do choose the buffet, fill up on salads, soups, and veggies first. Use a small plate.
- Like wraps? Choose fillings like brown rice mix with grilled veggies and hummus.
- For a quick lunch at your desk, have single-serve packages of crackers, fruit, peanut butter, soup, or tuna handy. Plan ahead to avoid the vending machine, which often offers unhealthy temptations when the snack attack hits.

Test Your C Smarts

Want to add some Vitamin C to your salad? Which of these red veggies will add the most C per half-cup serving?

- a. 1/2 cup cherry tomatoes
- b. 1/2 cup chopped red peppers

The correct answer is: b. 1/2 cup of chopped red peppers has 85 mg of Vitamin C, while the same amount of cherry tomatoes contains only 18.5 mg of Vitamin C.

Q & A: Ask the Expert

Q: Which is healthier – fresh, frozen, or canned fruits and veggies?

A: Any fruits and vegetables are better than no fruits and vegetables. They are the nutritional powerhouses of your diet. For peak flavor and good value, fresh produce in season is always a good choice. But frozen or canned fruits and vegetables, without added salt or sugar, are just as good for you as fresh. Rely on easy ways to sneak more fresh and frozen fruits and veggies into your diet. They are chock full of vitamins, minerals, fiber, and phytochemicals that may protect against cancer, heart disease, stroke, and other health problems.

TOP 5 WAYS TO THINK OUTSIDE THE BROWN BAG

Your brown bag lunch doesn't have to be boring. Try adding more brightly colored vegetables and fruits to your lunches for flavor and nutrition:

- 1 **Pack a salad.** Start with dark, leafy greens, which contain vitamins, including iron and folate, as well as cancer-fighting antioxidants. Combine greens like baby spinach leaves with dark lettuces, such as Romaine, for a delicious green salad. Top your salad with a healthy, low-fat dressing. Use a small amount of a heart-healthy fat, such as an olive or canola oil, mixed with a flavored vinegar or lemon juice. Throw in some chopped herbs such as mint, cilantro, basil or chives to boost flavor and health benefits.
- 2 **Eat fresh.** Summer is the perfect time of year to enjoy a fresh and colorful mix of foods. Try a different color each day — each has a variety of vitamins and minerals that work together to protect your health.
 - Red: Tomatoes, watermelon, strawberries, red grapes, raspberries, red peppers
 - Orange: Mango, apricots, carrots, papaya, peaches, oranges
 - Green: Broccoli, avocado, lettuce and other greens, chives, peas, kiwi fruit, green peppers
 - White: Cabbage, cauliflower, onions, garlic, scallions, leeks, tofu
 - Purple/Blue: Blueberries, red cabbage, raisins, eggplant, taro
 - Yellow: Corn, yellow peppers, pineapple, bananas, squash
- 3 **Add a protein punch.** Foods high in protein, like beans, give you important folate and minerals, plus an energy boost!
- 4 **Don't forget the whole grains.** Try whole grain options like cooked rice or whole wheat pasta to add extra fiber, vitamins, and minerals to your lunchtime meals.
- 5 **Throw in a hot potato.** Throw a baked potato with broccoli in your lunch bag for quick energy on the go.

Now you're ready to dig in and enjoy your nutritious and tasty brown bag lunch!

Learn more about Power 9[®] Principles at bluezonesproject.com