

# Why should you eat like the people who live in 'Blue Zones'?

By **NANCY CLANTON**  
Atlanta Journal-Constitution

There are five "Blue Zones" around the world, and the people who live in these areas are 10 times likelier than Americans to reach age 100. The name comes from the blue circles researchers drew on the map when identifying them.

"According to research published in *Nutrients* in May 2018, people living in these regions also enjoy lower rates of chronic disease than those living elsewhere, and their diet is believed to be a major component of why," *Everyday Health* wrote.

Blue Zone diets are based on local and regional offerings while limiting processed foods, added sugars, meat and dairy,

and focusing more on plant-based meals. While residents of the five areas tend to live longer and be healthier, *Everyday Health* reports, each place is different.

- **Okinawa, Japan:** Older Okinawans rely on gardens, which not only provide fresh produce but also exercise and stress relief.

- **Sardinia, Italy:** Sardinians limit meat consumption to Sundays and special events. The rest of the time they eat whole grains, beans, vegetables and fruit. They also indulge in a glass or two of red wine each day.

- **Nicoya, Costa Rica:** Nicoya residents tend to eat a light dinner earlier than Americans do. In addition, older residents eat a lot of squash, corn and beans.

- **Icaria, Greece:** Residents of

Icaria subscribe to the Mediterranean diet, which was deemed the best diet of 2022. As Greek Orthodox Christians, fasts are a frequent part of their religious practices.

- **Loma Linda, California:** Loma Linda is home to a community of Seventh-day Adventists. Its longest living residents are vegetarians or pescatarians who eat a very little sugar, salt and refined grains.

Blue Zone diets aren't just about what you're eating, however. They're also about how you eat.

"One of the principles is to eat until you're satisfied rather than completely full," registered dietitian Samantha Cassetty, co-author of "Sugar Shock," told *Everyday Health*. "We have a tendency to

eat quickly and not be so in touch with our bodies' hunger and fullness cues. It takes practice and getting used to, but you come to see that (eating until you're satisfied) fuels your body with the right amount of food, so you maintain good digestion and energy balance."

According to a 2016 study published in the *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine*, experts believe nine traits are responsible for the health and longevity of Blue Zone residents, and three of those pertain to diet.

- **The 80% rule:** In Blue Zones, people tend to stop eating when they're 80% full. They also have their bigger meals early, opting for lighter fare later in the day.

- **Plant slant:** Blue Zone residents focus on fruits, vegetables,

legumes and whole grains. They tend to avoid meat or eat it only on special occasions.

- **Wine at 5:** Although the research on the health benefits of even moderate amounts of alcohol is controversial, most people living in Blue Zones enjoy one to two glasses of wine daily.

Although Blue Zone diets are more about healthy living than losing weight, they are based on whole foods, which "tend to have fewer calories than processed forms of carbohydrates, protein or fats," Dr. Selvi Rajagopal, an internal medicine and obesity specialist with Johns Hopkins, told *Everyday Health*. "So (this diet) tends to help people maintain a healthier weight because overall, calorically, they're not taking in as much."

# Smoky, sweet and tangy: grilled steak tacos

By **GRETCHEN MCKAY**  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Tacos are a terrific midweek meal because they cook up fast and don't require a lot of preparation, other than some chopping and dicing of ingredients. This super-easy steak taco recipe hits all the right notes with its flavorful chili-lime marinade and array of colorful toppings, many of them in bountiful supply at local farmers markets and roadside farm stands.

I'm a big fan of flank steak because it's relatively lean and cooks up tender (and isn't super expensive), but you also could use skirt or flat-iron steaks. Grilled red pepper adds a smoky, sweet touch and you'll want to pile on some salty queso fresco — a soft, slightly tangy cheese that is easily crumbled. Your favorite salsa, chopped onion and sliced avocado are other traditional toppings and don't forget a good squeeze of fresh lime juice (The dash of acid complements the richer flavors inside the tortilla).

I used flour tortillas for a softer bite, but tacos are nothing if not customizable. For a chewier, gluten-free dish, substitute tamari for the soy sauce and construct the tacos on corn tortillas.



Steak tacos make a good midweek meal because they don't require a lot of preparation and cook up quickly.

## GRILLED STEAK TACOS

- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- Juice of 1 fresh lime (about 2 tablespoons)
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoons ancho chili powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 1/2 pounds flank steak
- 1 red bell pepper, seeded

and cut into thirds

- 12 flour tortillas
- 1/2 small red onion, diced
- Handful chopped fresh cilantro leaves
- 1 avocado, pitted and sliced
- 1/2 cup queso fresco, crumbled
- Red or green salsa, for serving
- 3 limes, cut into wedges

In a medium bowl, combine soy sauce, lime juice, 1 tablespoon canola oil, garlic, chili powder, cumin and oregano.

In a large bowl or 1-gallon Ziploc bag, combine soy sauce mixture and steak. Marinate for at least 1 hour or as long as overnight, turning the bag occasionally to redistribute the marinade.

When ready to cook, preheat grill to high heat. Using a pair of tongs, rub a paper towel coated with some of the remaining 1 tablespoon oil over the grill rack.

Drain marinade, place meat directly on the grill and cook for 5-6 minutes on each side (it should register 120-125 degrees on an instant-read thermometer for rare, 130-140 degrees for medium rare, and 145 degrees for medium). Remove from grill and let the steak rest on a cutting board, covered with foil, for 10 minutes.

While steak is resting, brush red pepper with remaining oil and grill until soft and charred, then cut into slices.

Warm tortillas on the grill (they will puff up and get crispy) or in the microwave and place in a basket for serving.

Cut the steak across the grain into strips. Place steak strips in the tortillas and top with red onion, avocado, cilantro, queso fresco and salsa. Squeeze a little lime juice on top, if desired. Serve warm.

Serves 4-6.

# Lighten up with a salmon bowl dinner

By **LINDA GASSENHEIMER**  
Tribune News Service

Looking for a light summer dinner? Here's one using fresh salmon in a simple Salmon Bowl. I used sesame oil to cook the salmon and topped it with toasted sesame seeds.

When I saw packages of cauliflower rice in the market, I decided to use it instead of rice for this recipe. It only took a few minutes to cook in the microwave and added a new texture and flavor to the bowl.



Linda Gassenheimer-TNS

Salmon bowl makes for a light summer dinner.

flower rice.

- Toast sesame seeds and set aside.
- Saute the salmon.
- Complete the salad.

### Shopping List

- To buy: 1 bag cauliflower rice, 1 container sesame seeds, 3/4 pound salmon fillet, 1 cucumber, 1 bag washed, ready-to-eat lettuce, 1 avocado, and one bottle reduced-fat oil and vinegar dressing.

- Staples: salt and black

peppercorns.

## SALMON BOWL

Recipe by Linda Gassenheimer

- 2 cups cauliflower rice
- 2 tablespoons sesame seeds
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 3/4 pound salmon fillet
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cups lettuce torn into bite size pieces

- 1 cup cucumber slices
- 1 avocado, peeled, seed removed and sliced
- 1/4 cup reduced-fat oil and vinegar dressing

Place cauliflower rice in a microwave-safe bowl and microwave on high 2 minutes. Remove and divide between 2 dinner bowls or plates. Toast sesame seeds in a toaster oven or under a broiler for 1 to 2 minutes or until they turn golden. Watch to make sure they do not burn. Heat a nonstick skillet over medium-high heat and add the oil. Add the salmon skin side up. Saute 2 minutes. Turn the salmon over. Cook 3 or 4 minutes. A meat thermometer should read 125 degrees. If you like your salmon more well done, cook it to 145 degrees. Add salt and pepper to taste. Divide the lettuce, cucumber slices and avocado slices between the 2 bowls or plates with the cauliflower rice. Divide the salmon in half and place on top of the vegetables. Spoon the dressing over the top and sprinkle the toasted sesame seeds on top of the salmon.

Yield 2 servings.

## SQUADRON

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Typing "spruce squadron" into your internet browser will bring up enough links to keep even the most devoted historical buffs busy for a

long, long time. There you will find internet links to many sites that have rosters of the Squadrons, maps of Army built railroads, dozens of photos taken during this time, and photos of the interiors of the mills. It's fascinating history.

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