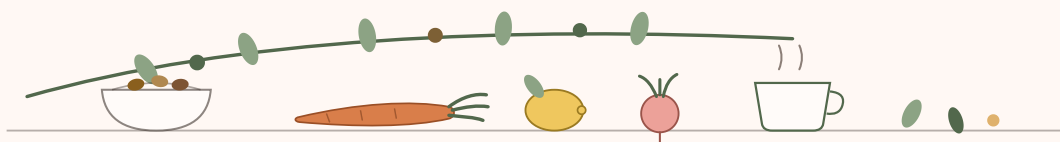


A FREE GUIDE FROM HEALTHBREW

Eating to *Live* to 100.

Eight quiet habits from the world's longest-lived kitchens — and the honest evidence behind each.

FROM THE DESK OF ALEX ANTONIOU, MD



WHERE PEOPLE ACTUALLY REACH 100

Pattern over *perfection*.

In the places where people most reliably reach 100 — Ikaria in Greece, Okinawa in Japan, Sardinia's highlands, Costa Rica's Nicoya Peninsula, and Loma Linda, California — nobody is counting macros. What Dan Buettner's Blue Zones reporting and the Okinawa Centenarian Study actually describe is less a diet than a posture toward food: mostly plants, mostly home-cooked, beans nearly daily, meat occasionally, meals eaten with other people, and an easy stop before full — the Okinawan *hara hachi bu*. These are observational findings, not controlled trials; geography, genetics, and community are tangled up in the results. But the pattern repeats often enough to be worth borrowing. What follows are eight habits drawn from that pattern — the pattern, never perfection.

 Ikaria GREECE	 Okinawa JAPAN	 Sardinia ITALY	 Nicoya COSTA RICA	 Loma Linda CALIFORNIA
MOSTLY PLANTS Beans nearly daily; meat as an occasion, not a default.	MOSTLY HOME-COOKED Short ingredient lists; long traditions.	MOSTLY TOGETHER Meals shared with other people, unhurried.	STOP BEFORE FULL <i>Hara hachi bu</i> — ease off around eighty percent.	

CLOSE THE KITCHEN

1 Close the kitchen, then close the day.

The same dinner, eaten later, is handled differently. As bedtime approaches, the body begins its shift toward rest — melatonin rising, insulin response softening — and meals eaten close to sleep are associated with higher overnight glucose and, in some studies, more fragmented sleep. Finishing the last bite around three hours before bed gives digestion a head start and lets cortisol hand over to melatonin roughly on schedule. Many of the long-lived communities eat their smallest meal in the late afternoon or early evening — and then simply stop.

WHY IT MATTERS Evening glucose handling and sleep quality are two levers you can move with a clock, not a diet.



WATER FIRST

2 A glass of water before anything else.

Overnight, you lose fluid with every breath, and most people wake mildly behind on water. One or two glasses first thing is a gentle way to begin refilling before the day gets busy. If your blood pressure is normal, some clinicians suggest a small pinch of salt or an electrolyte mix, on the reasoning that a little sodium may help the water stay in the body's cells rather than pass straight through — though the evidence here is thin and largely extrapolated.

Important: skip added sodium entirely if you have elevated blood pressure or any kidney or heart condition — and ask your physician before adding salt to anything.

WHY IT MATTERS You start every day mildly dehydrated; this is the least effortful fix in this guide.



EASY ON OILS

3 Fats closest to the food they came from.

The best-supported concern in the evidence isn't fat itself — it's what happens to oils under repeated or very high heat, where oxidation products accumulate; these have been linked, mainly in laboratory and some observational work, to vascular stress. A practical order of preference: whole-food fats first — nuts, seeds, avocado, olives — then extra-virgin olive oil used cold or over gentle heat. Favor unsaturated fats over saturated ones, and minimally processed oils with nothing added. What matters less than any single oil is how often the same oil meets a smoking pan.

WHY IT MATTERS The dose of heat-damaged fat, not the presence of fat, is where the evidence points.



SKIP THE PACKET

4 The shorter the ingredient list, the longer the tradition.

Ultra-processed foods are formulations of industrial ingredients — refined starches, oils, sweeteners, emulsifiers — built more for shelf life and craveability than nourishment. In the most careful test to date, a small NIH crossover trial, people offered ultra-processed meals ate roughly 500 calories a day more than the same people offered unprocessed meals matched for nutrients. Chocolate is a useful case study: cocoa itself is rich in flavanols, but most chocolate is a delivery vehicle for sugar — roughly 10–30% by weight even for dark bars, depending on cacao percentage, and around half for milk chocolate.

WHY IT MATTERS The clearest trial we have suggests these foods make overeating nearly automatic.



EAT YOUR PLANTS

5 Let the plants do the quiet work.

Fruits and vegetables carry the vitamins, minerals, and fiber the rest of the modern plate quietly lacks — and the fiber matters as much as anything, feeding the gut bacteria that do real metabolic work. One heuristic worth keeping: if a fruit tastes suspiciously sweet, enjoy it the way you'd enjoy dessert. Some commercial varieties have been bred dramatically sweeter than their ancestors, and your taste buds notice before any label does. None of this is a reason to eat less fruit — only to notice which ones are candy in costume.

WHY IT MATTERS Fiber and micronutrients are the two shortfalls most Western diets share.



THEN VS NOW • A CENTURY APART

6 Your great-grandmother's *carrot*.

Over the past century, produce has been selected for size, sweetness, yield, and shelf life. Along the way, some analyses of historical food-composition data suggest modest declines in certain minerals and vitamins in some crops — real, but no reason to skip the produce aisle. Today's fruit is still absolutely worth eating. It's just a little candy-er than what your great-grandparents ate.

The carrot



THEN • C. 1920



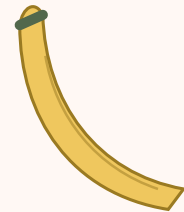
NOW

- Then: slimmer, paler, more bitter — closer to its wild root.
- Now: bred plump, sweet, and uniformly orange.
- Still one of the best things in the drawer.

The banana



THEN • WILD TYPES



NOW

- Then: older and wild varieties ran smaller and firmer — more starch than sugar.
- Now: selected over generations for sweetness, size, and shelf life.
- Nature's original grab-and-go — just sweeter than it used to be.

WHY IT MATTERS Knowing what changed keeps you eating produce with open eyes — not giving up on it.

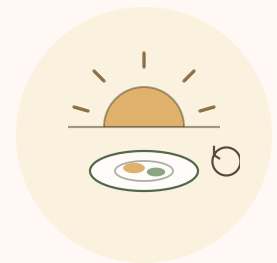
Illustrations are stylized and illustrative, not botanical records.

FRONT-LOAD THE DAY

7 Give the day's calories a whole day to work.

"Breakfast is the most important meal" was always more slogan than science. The steadier claim is mechanical: calories eaten earlier give the body an entire day of movement, work, and warmth in which to use them, while the same calories at nine at night arrive as the metabolism is powering down. Trials of early time-restricted eating lean favorable — better morning insulin sensitivity and blood pressure in some studies — though the literature is still young. And if life forces you to skip a meal, most people appear to do better skipping dinner than breakfast.

WHY IT MATTERS The same calories may land differently at 8 a.m. than at 9 p.m.



ABOUT THE WINE

8 The honest word on the pour.

For years, moderate drinking wore a health halo. The largest recent analyses have dimmed it: the 2018 Lancet analysis of Global Burden of Disease 2016 data concluded that the level of drinking that minimizes health loss is zero, and in 2023 the WHO stated plainly that no level of alcohol is safe for health. Livers do differ — genetics vary the enzymes that clear alcohol — but for most people, habitual intake runs ahead of that capacity. Yes, some blue-zones communities drink wine socially. The longevity signal there, on the best reading, is the company — not the pour.

WHY IT MATTERS If you drink, let it be for the table you share — not for your health.



None of this works as a rule book. It works as *noticing*.

Habits change when a day gets looked at honestly — what you ate, when you stopped, who you sat with — one evening at a time. That nightly look is exactly what HealthBrew is for: close each day green, yellow, or red, and watch the pattern shift slowly, the way the long-lived places do it — without ever calling it a program.

TONIGHT, IN 60 SECONDS

Close your first day — was it green, yellow, or *red*?

First 10 daily closes free — no credit card.

healthbrew.app

SOURCES

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