

Blue Zones: the world's longest living populations

Researchers have identified five regions across the world, known as the **Blue Zones**, with the greatest percentage of individuals 100 years of age or older, also known as centenarians. Through the review of epidemiological data, statistics, and birth certificates, Blue Zones are proven to have ten times as many centenarians compared to the United States, and the lifestyles of individuals living in these areas contribute significantly to their health, happiness, and longevity.



The following nine lifestyle commonalities between the five Blue Zone regions, commonly referred to as the Power 9, contribute to longevity and slowed aging.

Natural movement

Individuals living in Blue Zone regions engage in everyday activities, such as gardening, walking, and climbing hills and mountains.

They also refrain from using modern mechanical conveniences, such as washing machines and farming equipment, for daily tasks.

Sense of purpose

They have a specific reason for waking up each day. Having a clear purpose in life may increase life expectancy by up to seven years.

Stress management

The world's longest-living people engage in activities that help manage stress, such as napping, praying, and attending happy hour with friends.

80% rule

People in Blue Zones stop eating when their stomachs are 80% full. They also tend to eat smaller meals and avoid eating late in the day.

Plant-centric diet

The majority of their meals come from plant sources. Animal proteins are consumed in small amounts about five times per month.

Wine

Enjoying moderate amounts of wine (one to two glasses per day) with friends and family is a common practice.

Spirituality

Most individuals belong to a faith-based community. Attending weekly faith-based services may add up to 14 years to life expectancy.

Family first

Family relationships are a top priority for individuals in Blue Zone regions. Aging parents and grandparents typically live with family members, parents invest time in their children, and individuals have committed life partners.

Strong social networks

Centenarians commonly choose to participate in social circles that support healthy lifestyles and behaviors.

Reference:
Buettner, D., & Skemp, S. (2016). Blue zones: Lessons from the world's longest lived. *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine*, 10(5), 318–321.

