Are you Planning for Your 101st Birthday Party?

Fred Broughton
Presenter
In most of the world, the prospect of living to age 100 sounds like a mixed blessing. While a long life is generally good, many people worry that it also equals diminished health and mental function. But that isn't so in the "blue zones."

In four hot spots around the globe, people live to 100 in great numbers. But it's not only about longevity—they live with strength, vitality and happiness. Residents of the blue zones regularly exercise, tend their gardens, are active members of their communities, eat delicious food and even have sex!

To find out what they're doing right—and we're doing wrong—Oprah and Dr. Oz look to Dan Buettner, a freelance writer for National Geographic who spent seven years researching his book The Blue Zones: Lessons for Living Longer from the People Who've Lived the Longest.
Our team of researchers visited five places around the world where people live the longest to distill their secrets of healthy longevity. People in the Blue Zones nurture strong social networks, consume a plant-based diet, eat in moderation and incorporate daily, natural physical activity into their lives. Here’s a profile of the journey into each longevity pocket further described in *The Blue Zones*
Sardinia, Italy
The mountainous island of Sardinia is home to some of the world’s longest-lived men. Here exists an ancient culture characterized by traditional social values, respect for elders and loyalty to the family clan. Indigenous Sardinians abide by unwritten laws and have survived attempts at foreign domination for centuries. Look at what pushes the people here to live past 100 >>

Okinawa, Japan
Okinawa is an archipelago off the cost of Japan with some of the world’s longest-lived people. Rich in their traditions, Okinawan’s real secret to health and longevity comes from their culture and environment. To learn more, check out our longevity highlights from Okinawa >>
Loma Linda, CA
For the past half-century, members of the Seventh Day Adventist community in Loma Linda, whose faith endorses healthy living, lead the nation in the longest life expectancy. Read more about how this town in California has become home of the longest-lived people in America. >>

Ikaria, Greece
A small Greek island in the Aegean Sea located southwest of Samos holds some of the world’s longest lived people. Our researchers found that people of Ikaria are three times more likely to reach age 90 than in the U.S. They will also have about 20% less cancer, half the rate of cardiovascular disease, and almost no dementia. For a more in-depth look, check out Ikaria’s longevity highlights >>
Nicoya Costa Rica
A Costa Rican man at age 60 has about twice the chance of reaching age 90 as does a man living in the United States, France, or even Japan. Costa Rica spends only 15 percent of what America does on health care, yet its people appear to be living longer, seemingly healthier lives than people in any other country on Earth. Find out why Costa Rica is a longevity hot spot >>
From our research in the Blue Zones we found nine common characteristics of all the world’s longest-lived people. The findings will amaze you! The secret of how to live longer lies not in diets or exercise programs, but in creating the right environment for yourself. These nine characteristics we call Power 9® can help you live longer and look and feel younger at every age. Discover the Power 9®
Okinawa’s Ushi Okushima still gardening at age 109
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For example, Okinawan longevity is the best in the world, per capita. One in 2,000 Okinawans can expect to make it past 100, whereas the average American has a 1 in 100,000 chance (according to statistics from 1990).
102-year-old Panchita, who still chops wood every day for cooking
The first blue zone on the list is Costa Rica's Nicoya Peninsula, a small region located about a two-hour trip on bumpy roads from the national capital of San Jose. Nicoya is the biggest blue zone on earth—home to literally hundreds of centenarians.

To see what makes the residents of the Nicoya Peninsula so vital, Dr. Oz and Dan paid a visit. There, they met 102-year-old Panchita, who still chops wood every day for cooking; 86-year-old Filippa, who sells her homemade tamales; and 95-year-old Serillo, who was cruising by on his bike as he visited with neighbors.
Dr. Oz's next stop is the home of 99-year-old Jose
Dr. Oz's next stop is the home of 99-year-old Jose, who tells them about his typical day. Jose says after breakfast he tends his garden and clears underbrush around his corn crops.

When he sees Jose squatting down and using a machete to cut weeds around his corn plants, Dr. Oz is dumbstruck. "He's whacking through this stuff better than any lawn mower you can buy. It's remarkable," he says. "I'm looking at a 99-year-old man doing a better job than I could taking out the underbrush here."
Home to the longest-living Americans is Loma Linda, California, a town 60 miles east of Los Angeles.
A big part of life in Loma Linda revolves around faith—it's home to 9,000 followers of the Seventh Day Adventist church. The Christian religion emphasizes diet and health and frowns on smoking, drinking and eating meat and processed foods.

Heart surgeon Ellsworth Wareham is a 94-year-old Adventist who can still be found in the operating room. "I think it's important for an individual to have some security and peace in his life. And I get that from believing in a loving, caring God, you see. And so if he's in charge of my life, why sit around and worry? I mean, he takes care of the universe, he can certainly take care of me, so I don't worry."
Dan drops in on 105-year-old Giovanni,
The next stop on our blue zone tour is Sardinia, a Mediterranean island 120 miles off the coast of Italy. Here, you'll find the highest number of male centenarians in the world.

When Dan drops in on 105-year-old Giovanni, he's greeted with a glass of wine—at 10 a.m.! Then, to test his strength, Dan challenges Giovanni to arm wrestle—and loses.

Giovanni spent most of his life walking Sardinia's rocky terrain as a sheep herder. The low-impact exercise helps keep his heart strong, especially since a daily Sardinian hike through the mountains can burn up to 490 calories an hour.

What fuels Giovanni? "I eat bread, cheese and dark wine," he says.
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15/09/2007