

# EAT. STAY. LOVE.

## Ikaria

Now may be the perfect time to learn of other lifestyles across the globe and perhaps make educated adjustments to extend your longevity, like taking a cue from the diets and lifestyles of the original 5 Blue Zones! In this 5-week lighthearted mini-guide, I'll offer suggestions on ways to eat, stay safe and love all 5 of these diverse cultures that have the largest population of folks living over the age of 100! All hail centenarians!

Week δύο: Ikaria, Greece

Legend has it that the island is named after Icarus who supposedly fell into the sea off of the coast. You remember this myth, right? The one with Daedalus, father of Icarus. Both escaped the labyrinth with wings made of wax. Icarus flew too close to the sun and his wings melted. Shocker! There's a lesson in there somewhere and it's this: Wear sunscreen!

This blue zone is another island (I'm starting to sniff a blue zone theme here). With only around 8,000 inhabitants - It might start getting a little crowded due to the fact that one out of three Ikarians live well into their 90's! Why? According to the Ikaria Study conducted by the Athens School of Medicine, this longevity is due in part to a diet which includes olive oil, red wine (oh yeah, another theme), fish, coffee, herbal tea, honey, potatoes, legumes and a limited amount of meat and dairy products (except for goat milk, of course.) Hey, you could do that diet standing on your head! We've all done it at one point or another. It's called the Mediterranean Diet! What's not to love? Fish and wine! Yes, please! The study also found that the Ikarians reduce emotional and cognitive dysfunction by taking daily naps and gardening. Another lesson to be learned here: Don't worry, be happy!



After your leisurely and safe walk or quality gardening, you might still have time on your hands, so why not try cooking a few classic Greek dishes? The ingredients should be easy to find; even in these trying times. Start with Tzatziki - a simple and delicious mixture of yogurt, cucumbers, garlic and lemon. Delish on veggies and pita bread. Oh heck, add some hummus to that as well. We've got time, make a big pot of Fassolada, a hearty bean soup. Who doesn't have beans in their pantry? Don't forget the Greek wine - retsina. In years gone by Greek wine meant one thing: an acquired pine-sappy smell and taste. And it still does. I prefer the rosé' - less pine-y! Go ahead and start with a nip of Ouzo and then smash a plate. Or three! *Opa!*

"What do you mean he don't eat no meat? Oh, that's Ok, I make lamb". Yep, you guessed it - "My Big Fat Greek Wedding". After you've cleaned up your broken plates, check out a film set in Greece. "Zorba the Greek". Or "Mama Mia" - pairs well with rosé' and napping! There's always "Troy". Starring Brad Pitt. Need I say more?

Tired of the virtual tour? While listening to traditional Greek music (I found a station on Pandora) learn how to Sirtaki. The famous Greek dance that involves both fast and slow steps. And touching others so, grab a broom and watch out for those broken bits of plate. Now is the time to literally dance like NO ONE is watching!

Plan a trip to Greece for next year. This travel ban has got to end some time. I bet air fair is really cheap right about now. There are wonderful Youtube travel videos which should answer all of your questions and pique your interest. Don't forget to learn the language. Succeed at this task and you can honestly say, "It's all Greek to me"!

When restaurants open again, find a Greek one and order the Saganaki. One of my favorites. Halloumi cheese flambéed table side. If you like your eyebrows, do not try this at home!

Next week: Loma Linda, California

For the three of you that are reading this; I do hope it's the best five minutes of your quarantine and inspired you to "when in Rome" *at home!* If so, please share pictures, thoughts and stories of your virtual trip to Ikaria!