

EAT. STAY. LOVE.



LOMA LINDA California

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 three: Loma Linda, CA

I guess the best way to start this week's article is by asking the following question: Is living a long, healthy, spiritually and emotionally fulfilling life in a community surrounded by like-minded friends and neighbors worth giving up a few vices? Well, what are the vices you may ask? Cigarettes? No-brainer. Meat? More difficult but doable. Alcohol? Hmm...that's a big ask especially for our living-in-paradise resort community and could be a deal breaker for some. Including me!

However, if your answer was an emphatic, "Yes!" then read on about the virtuous little community in the heart of wicked Southern California: Loma Linda.

Loma Linda (Spanish for "beautiful hill") is located in the middle of the San Bernadino Valley. Its citizenry of roughly 24,000 tend to live 8 to 10 years longer than most Americans. Why is this? Simple answer: Seventh-day Adventists baby!

“ I have a philosophy: You do the best you can. And the things you can't do anything about, don't give any thought to them ”

- Dr. Ellsworth Wareham, Seventh-Day Adventist

Over seventy-five percent of Loma Linda residents are Seventh-day Adventists.

This religion focuses on a healthy lifestyle and an emphasis on service to church and community. These twin factors of physical and emotional health equals longevity. Now, perhaps you're thinking, "But I'm not a Seventh-day Adventist and I've been pretty unhealthy my entire life. Is it too late to change?" Happily, no! It's never too late.

You want to focus on a few, simple things to increase longevity: don't smoke, keep your weight below 25 BMI (body mass index), eat a plant-based diet, eat an early dinner (we know a lill something about that here in Florida - Early Bird Specials anyone?), drink a lot of water, eat a lot of nuts and exercise! Easy Peasy Lemon Squeezy!

Another thing the ageless folks of Loma Linda advocate is to "find a sanctuary in time." For Seventh-day Adventists this is the sabbath, during which they focus on God, family, friends and nature. Just as equally important as their faith, Seventh-day Adventists spend a lot of time socializing. Actual face-to-face time. Remember that?

Their compassion and respect for animals ensures many of them eat a "Garden of Eden" diet. While very few still consume dairy and eggs.

Suppressing that craving for a pulled pork slider right about now? Me too!

For you this could be a fabby opportunity to beef up (pun intended) your meatless-Monday game. Say, try eating a plant-based diet six days a week. Then eat that pork sammy on Meat Monday!

Spending quality time with family and friends always feeds the soul (except during a worldwide quarantine, of course), and branching out in other ways can also be helpful. Giving back to your community (most especially in these challenging times) can help stave off depression by providing a sense of purpose to your life. You also might pick up a few more friends along the way! Perhaps a non-drinking buddy! Surely there's at least one on this island.

So, go ahead and throw back that last quarantini, grill some veggies and unplug! Put your pants on (hopefully they still fit) and get outside in nature - safely, of course!

Next week: Okinawa, Japan

Let me take a moment to say thank you to SPB residents - great job staying safe and healthy. We are a truly blessed community. Soon our beaches will open...let's show California how it's done right! Stay happy. Stay well. And, yes, *still*, stay Homa Linda!