

Food Talk

By Laurie Schwarm

Lately I've been reading about cultures in which long life, and I mean long life to the tune of 150 years, is more prevalent than in our own society. There are three geographic locations where these people are found in numbers and they are the Pakastani Hunzas living high in the Himalayas, the Vilcabambans of the Andes mountains in Peru, and the people living in the Caucasus region of Russia.

Researchers have found several corresponding characteristics which seem to link the three cultures together and may explain why they live such long and productive lives, for in most cases these centenarians are still working and useful members of their society. First of all was the fact that all these people live in mountain climates where the air is clean, thin and pure. This kind of air conditions the heart early on to be strong by opening up the blood vessels within the heart. Secondly, these people have been hard workers, physically, for all their lives. They begin working ten hours or more in the fields when they are merely ten years old and are still going at it at age 115!

Living in isolated regions of the world, free from the tensions and traumas of the modern world of course adds to their tranquility and certainly family genes had something to do with the outstanding ages reached by some of these folks - - -

HOWEVER, DIET seemed to be the strongest and most convincing link between all these peoples. This is nice because while we can't live in the mountains and still remain here in Lawrence, Kansas, and while we can't alter the sort of family genes we are stuck with, we can alter our diet to be more life-giving.

When analyzed, these centenarians' diets had these similarities: moderation in quantities eaten, avoidance of excess fats and animal protein and ample vitamins, minerals and fiber in their diets. More specifically, these people eat only 35 to 50 grams of protein daily while we Americans eat more than 100 grams daily. Worst of all, most of our protein comes from animal proteins that are also high in fats and

calories. In contrast, the people we are talking about eat little animal meat. It is considered a rare treat, the usual diet consisting of fresh fruits, vegetables, nuts and grains, and fresh dairy products. From these sources they get all the vitamins, minerals, and fiber that the body needs to be healthy and strong.

Translated into a help sheet for us, the suggestions might go as follows:

- Lower your protein intake and get more protein from grains, beans, nuts and seeds, and less from red meat.
- Do not eat as much as you are used to. Americans eat 30% more food than their bodies need.
- Eat chicken and fish more often and red meat less often, only 3 times a week.
- Use more fresh fruits and vegetables for vitamins and whole grains, beans, rice to give minerals and fiber (and protein.)



Using seasonal foods, this month try Baked Butternut Squash with honey and sesame seeds, Sweet Potatoes cooked and sliced with fruits, and cooked Cranberries.

CORRECTION: In my recipe last month for Apple Muffins, 3/4 cup milk should be added to other wet ingredients. Sorry!

Still Meeting cont.

an increasingly complex structure of member involvement.

With a solid tradition of change, the co-op now begins its fourth year of business at yet another site. The Community Mercantile bought the Turner's Grocery during the summer with a second fund raising effort. And the experimentation with member involvement and a customer/member operated grocery continues. The present attempt to broaden co-op decision-making and responsibility through de-centralized work teams reflects the desire to refine the concept of a member operated store through the confusing mesh of business needs and social/political needs.



The Average American ends up over 1,100 miles from his or her average food supply. This is not 1,100 miles as the crow flies. It may have started out as a nice field of beans right next door to the nice family who ultimately bought a wee bit of it. But meanwhile it was hauled three times and processed twice, all with imported fossil fuel. (A talk by Frank Ford, head of Arrowhead Mills Foods.)

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