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February 16-29, 2020 E-mail: bajatimes@yahoo.com WWW.BAJATIMES.COM

LOCAL & WORLD NEWS

ICE releases US citizen, 18, wrongfully detained near border

HOUSTON (AP) — A U.S.-born 18-year-old has been released from immigration custody after wrongfully being detained for more than three weeks.

Francisco Erwin Galicia left a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention center in Pearsall, Texas, on Tuesday. His lawyer, Claudia Galan, confirmed he had been released, less than a day after The Dallas Morning News reported about his detention.

Galicia lives in the border city of Edinburg, Texas, and was traveling north with a group of friends when they were stopped at a Border Patrol inland checkpoint. According to Galan and the Morning News, agents apprehended Galicia on suspicion that he was in the U.S. illegally even though he had a Texas state ID.

Galicia was detained for three weeks by the Border Patrol, then transferred to the ICE detention center.

Galan said she believes Galicia was "absolutely" a victim of racial profiling. The others in the vehicle with him were all Latinos, including his 17-year-old brother Marlon, who was born in Mexico and was in the U.S. illegally. Marlon told the Morning News that he agreed to be returned to Mexico.

"I'm so thankful Francisco is free and he can sleep at home tonight and see his mom," Galan said.

ICE and U.S. Customs and Border Protection, which oversees the Border Patrol, jointly issued a statement Wednesday accusing Galicia of having provided "conflicting reports regarding status of citizenship" while detained, without providing specifics. Galan said Tuesday that Galicia's mother had incorrectly applied for a tourist visa for him that suggested he had been born in Mexico.

"Both CBP and ICE are committed to the fair treatment of migrants in our custody and continue to take appropriate steps to verify all facts of this situation," the statement said.

Continued page 02

A Most Interesting Life

See page 04

Phil Friedman's 1st job connected with fishing was aboard a Southern California charter boat when he was just 12 years old. He's the youngster in the white shirt. (L). He graduated to host a nationally syndicated radio show (C) before moving to China & teaching the population there about, amongst other myriad subjects, our Christmas traditions. (R)

Foods to Live By

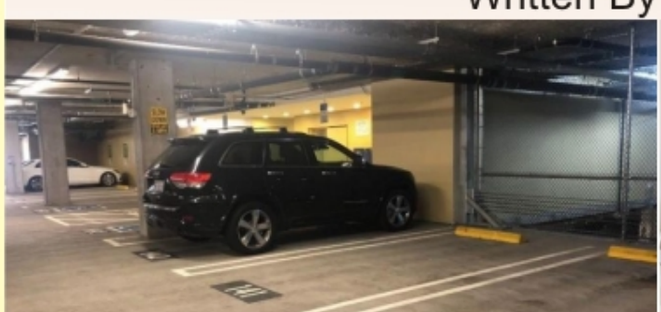
Written By Dan Buettner For National Geographic

See page 10

The culinary traditions of Sardinia, Italy (L), Nicoya, Costa Rica (C) and Loma Linda, California (R) are all interconnected by what each has contributed to the longest lifespans on our planet.

A Parking Space in a Garage in San Francisco is Selling for $100,000

Written By Bill Williams



See page 05

Hard-to-believe that keeping a car garaged in San Francisco costs three times the U.S median monthly income (L). Perhaps even harder to believe is that a one bedroom 640 square foot apartment would set its owner back a total of nearly one million U.S. dollars. (R) Viva Mexico!!!

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From Front Page...

ICE releases US citizen, 18, wrongfully detained near border

The Border Patrol apprehends people entering the U.S. illegally, both directly at the U.S.-Mexico border and with its series of highway checkpoints miles from the border. In most cases, agents glance at drivers passing through the checkpoints and let them pass quickly. A passport or proof of citizenship is not normally demanded to pass through an inland checkpoint.

Galicia was detained by the Border Patrol for well above the 72 hours that CBP says it is supposed to hold detainees. But in South Texas' Rio Grande Valley, where Galicia was arrested, the Border Patrol is holding hundreds of adult men and women accused of entering the country illegally for longer than 72 hours. In McAllen, Texas, adult men are being held in fenced-in pens. Vice President Mike Pence visited those pens this month, and reports and video of conditions there sparked outrage.

The Morning News reported that Galicia wasn't transferred out of Border Patrol custody to ICE until Saturday. That's when he was able to make collect calls to his mother. Galan drove Tuesday to the detention center in Pearsall to secure his release.

Immigration authorities are not supposed to detain U.S. citizens. But both ICE and CBP have apprehended citizens in the past.

A 2018 investigation by the Los Angeles Times found that ICE had released more than 1,480 people after investigating their citizenship status. In one case, a U.S. citizen was held in immigration detention for more than three years.

Last week, a California congresswoman visiting the Border Patrol's processing center in McAllen encountered a 13-year-old girl holding a U.S. passport. The girl was waiting with her mother, who had allegedly crossed the border illegally. After inquiries were made, the Border Patrol released both.

Galicia's case comes as ICE practices have drawn protests from Democrats and advocacy groups across the U.S.

In Kansas City, officers smashed a car window and dragged a Mexican man out of the vehicle in front of his girlfriend and two young children. The woman broadcast the arrest on Facebook.

In Nashville, neighbors surrounded an ICE van after it blocked the driveway of a Tennessee man who was targeted for arrest. The agent gave up trying to arrest the man after four hours.

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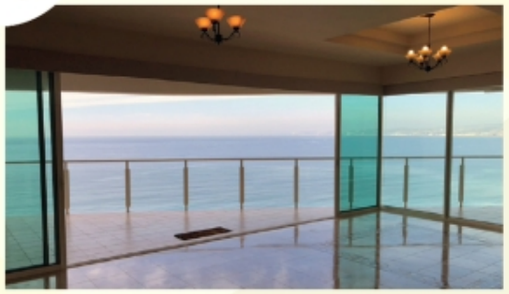

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From Front Page...

A Most Interesting Life

Phil and one of his Chinese students

Phil Friedman was born in Torrance, California in 1958. From his earliest remembrances, fishing was his most favored pastime. Even today, he can still vividly recall his 1/2 day trips out of Redondo Beach on that location's fabled charter boats. By the time he had turned twelve he was a regular on them, volunteering to help the captain and the crew clean up after the conclusion of the day's adventures. He even distinctly remembered when the skipper offered him a deal he couldn't refuse: if he helped scrub the boat when it returned to port he could fish for free. His weekends-at-sea also enabled him to catch enough fish to sell them for a handsome profit, as well. He eventually became a regular deckhand on board the Redondo Special and then moved on to many other sport fishing boats like the Searcher, Grande, Toronado, and the Qualifier 105. He later captained the commercial fishing vessel Thunderfish out of Redondo Beach focusing on catching rockfish on Tanner Banks.

In 1985 he came up with plan to further capitalize on his love affair with his piscine adventures.He offered a daily service called 976-TUNA to the fishing community of call-in reports about what was biting, where the catch was best, and tips on how to ensure success. He recalled for us that the service cost the caller $2.00 per connection and he got to keep $1.50 for each tidbit of information that he provided. He was getting at best a handful of calls a day until his parents were shocked to see that number shoot up into (first) the hundreds and then (shortly thereafter) the thousands. Apparently, an outdoor fishing reporter by the name of Earl Grusky wrote an article in the Los Angeles Times, about Phil's daily informational service and the business began booming beyond the youngster's wildest dreams.

Fast forward to just a few years ago to read about Phil's exploits on behalf of the less fortunate amongst us in Rosarito:

Phil's television and radio shows featured world class athletes (like the Los Angeles Lakers' great stars,Brian Shaw, Flynn Robinson, Keith Erickson, and Luke Walton (and outdoorsmen like Patty & Tery Flynn). Rock and roll legend Ted Nugent and captain Paul Watson from Whale Wars used to spar on Phils radio show regularly. Phil has interviewed Jeannie Buss, Rex Linn, Henry Winkler to name a few more celebrities.

"I have been so blessed in my life," said Friedman. "I am beyond lucky."

Here are just a few of the things that Friedman has done in his life.

•Has taken over 100,000 inner city children fishing.

•Volunteered two years of his time teaching English in Mexico and Costa Rica with the Franciscan Fathers.

•Hosted the first Spanish language outdoors radio show in Los Angeles.

•Was awarded the Hero in Education award by the California Lottery during a Los Angeles Lakers game.

•Phil has been a newspaper writer, radio show host and voice over actor for decades.

•He has taught in Mexico, Costa Rica, China and the United States.

•He spoke with Kareem Abdul Jabar, Keith Erickson and other Los Angeles Lakers at the Flynn Robinson Memorial.

•Put on a special basketball camp with some Los Angeles Laker players for 300 children at the Rosarito Beach Hotel

•Took over 100 kids for local orphanages in Ensenada on their first sport fishing trip on the Ensenada Clipper with world champion Los Angeles Laker, Flynn Robinson.

•In 2020, he celebrated 8 years of sobriety from alcoholism.

Then, three years ago, Phil was looking for a new challenge. That took him to Kunshan, China where he is a teacher at the prestigious Kunshan International School. He teaches English, Spanish, Public Speaking, Science and Reading. He says one of the best things he has ever done in his life was to play Santa Claus to 2000 kids in China.

While in China, Phil also started walking and walking and walking. He came up with the idea of walking around China and other parts of the world to stay healthy and positive and share with others all about his extraordinary adventures. In the process, he lost over 160-pounds. You can follow him on Instagram at Walkwithphil.

What's next for this extraordinary human being? Stay tuned, we'll be among the first to know and we promise to share all of the details with you as soon as we do!!!

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EDITORIAL OFFICES:
Benito Juárez Blvd. #23-100
Rosarito Beach, México
TEL (661) 612-1244
(661)613-0551

EDITOR:
Gil Sperry
e-mail: gilsperry@yahoo.com

CLASSIFIEDS:
Ana Karen Urrea
classifieds_bajatimes@yahoo.com

SALES AGENT:
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COLLECTOR
Viry Bermudez

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From Front Page...

A Parking Space in a Garage in San Francisco is Selling for $100,000

·A parking space in San Francisco is on the market for $100,000.

·The tenants of the apartment were previously renting the space for $300 per month.

·The space is selling separately from the apartment at the same address, which

San Francisco is famously expensive, and this parking space selling for $100,000 is nearly half the cost of the average US home.

This parking spot in San Francisco's South Beach neighborhood has been listed since mid-December, and the price isn't necessarily outlandish. Realtor Bill Williams told SFGate that another space in the same garage sold for $90,000 in November.

In the listing, Williams emphasizes the prime location of the spot. " Great parking spot for investor clients, 1 block from the ballpark!" The listing also starts out with a call to "PARK YOUR MONEY." "It's a safe place to park your money," Williams told SFGate. "It could be a nice hedge against the stock market dropping."

Spot 140 in the garage could be a sound investment, given that the current owners rent that space out for $300 a month.

And, in case the buyer somehow thinks they've found the deal of the century for an apartment, the listing clarifies "To be clear: This is for a PARKING SPACE ONLY."

A condo at 88 Townsend St, was also recently for sale at a San Francisco-reasonable price of $849,000, and it sold this month for an undisclosed amount. It was listed with Dan Dodd at Compass.

The apartment in 88 Townsend was formerly a 19th-century warehouse that has since been converted into 112 condos, plus a shared courtyard and roof deck.

How California Got Its Name

Written by Eric Escalante

CALIFORNIA, USA — Anything donning the name "California" may very well owe its namesake to a 16th century Spanish romance novel and a fantastical island populated with women and gold. "It's out of Spanish literature, no doubt about it, but it's very complex the story of how the geographic name evolved," said Bill Swagerty, a history professor at University of the Pacific, located just north of Los Angeles..

Swagerty tied part of California's name to the Spanish novel *"Las Sergas de Esplandián"* [the adventures of *Esplandián]*, a Spanish romance story that reflects the crusades and the battles of the Moors against the Christians. In the book, California was the island of a legendary queen named Califia who had an army of women, an island filled with gold, and pet griffins that ate men.

However, California's name didn't just appear in the area after the book was written. It took years after Baja California was discovered by Cortés until the first reference of California was put on a map.The area's first ever branding as California came in 1562, when a map of the area was made with California's name right at the tip of Baja California. Swagerty said the cartographer, Deigo Gutiérrez, associated the area with the phrase *"Calida Fornax"* - which translates to "hot, fiery furnace."

California was believed to be an island separate from the mainland in the 1630's until Father Eusebio Kino discovered that California wasn't an island and could be reached by land from Mexico.

Why did people come to California?

"It's always been an allure, I think, for people who wanted to get to the west coast…," said Swagerty. But while that allure brought people in relatively modern eras, he said that allure wasn't always there for the earliest settlers.

Initially, during the Spanish era, the population was in the hundreds, not the hundreds of thousands. It wasn't an alluring place to be for Mexican colonists, who had gotten incentives to become citizens of California towns like Los Angeles, San Diego, and Santa Barbara. "They knew they would be so far from home [that] they wouldn't see relatives, perhaps ever again, and the supply route... was so iffy and so irregular that it was not a pleasant place to be for the average settler. That's just the truth of it," Swagerty said.

By 1848, that mentality changed when gold was found in California."It was the gold rush – the world rushed in overnight as J.S. Holiday put it…," Swagerty said.

The Gold Rush was the largest mass migration that the country had ever seen, and it was the origin behind the populations of many California cities like Placerville, Roseville, Stockton, Galt, Nevada City, and Folsom.

According to Swagerty, about 300,000 people flooded into California within two years, which is roughly the entire population of Stockton."That's where the population rush began but the second largest demographic push in California came in the 1950's with the 'Move to California' on Highway 66," said Swagerty.

The origins of that migration can be traced back to the Great Depression and the mid-westerners who went to Southern California. He said this migration led to people becoming factory workers around World War 2 and citizens during the baby boom.

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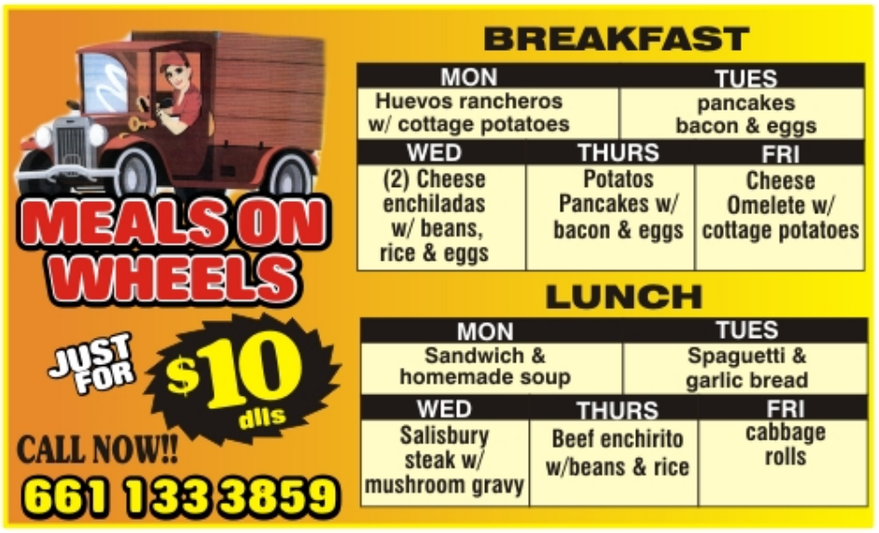

Birria and *Ramen*. It Just Makes Sense

Written by Lynn Q Yu for The Los Angeles Times

Chef Antonio de Livier wa in northern Baja doing consulting work for a farm four years ago when he had a flash of insight. "We had this great lamb, I started doing *birria* with the lamb, and then I threw noodles in it because I wanted noodle soup," he said. "I loved the alkaline noodle and how it reacted to a very spicy broth, but with allspice and cinnamon and chiles and different Mexican ingredients."T-hat *birria-ramen*, which De Livier calls *birriamen*, is now the centerpiece at *Animo*, his burgeoning Mexico City restaurant chain.

A soup-based business model for a culinary establishment seemed, at the outset, to be a preposterous move — few others were doing it in Mexico City, and De Livier knew that in order for the business to survive in the megalopolis, he would have to offer something singular. *Birriamen* became that calling card.The road to a bowl of *birriamen* is a time-consuming, craft-centered process, reminiscent of the hours that go into making a bowl of *pho*. Although his original version was made with lamb, De Livier settled on *birria de res* for his restaurant *birriamen* for mass-market appeal. He begins his day by cooking beef tongue, oxtail and a bit of lamb to create what he says is "not a *brodo*, not a soup, but a broth." He then adds *chiles* and spices before moving on to the *adobo*. The first broth takes about six hours to make; the *birria* about four. The *ramen* noodles are sourced from a shop three blocks away and made fresh daily.

The lengthy process has its share of challenges, and sourcing quality ingredients in particular has been an issue, said De Livier, who also runs an *escabeche* restaurant in Guadalajara and was previously a chef at a Cabo San Lucas hotel chain. "We live in a huge city and use big quantities," he said, "and sometimes things happen that you can't control."For instance, occasionally the beef has been frozen and then thawed before being delivered, a process that he said corrupts the quality of the final dish. Unfortunately, there's no way to know if the beef was previously frozen until De Livier can taste-test the broth. If it turns out that's the case, he has to start all over.

The noodle soup — which costs 84 *pesos*, or less than $5 — that finally hits the customer's table is the culmination of more than nine hours of stewing and cooking and preparation. The broth and noodles are topped with thin slices of brisket; *cilantro,* onion and lime are available as add-ons.

The success of the noodles — De Livier sells around 350 bowls a day — has allowed him to expand *Animo* to three locations in the city. The restaurants also sell soups, *tacos* and other items, but *birriamen* makes up about 40% of the business.

Mexico City's Asian food scene has become, in recent years, robust. In *Zona Rosa,* Korean BBQ comparable to that of L.A.'s Koreatown is readily available; in *Centro Historico,* Chinese buffets dot every other block; in *Condesa,* Japanese *ramen* is wildly popular. Has the city's *comida oriental* influenced the flavors of De Livier's dish?"The *ramen* scene in Mexico City is everywhere, but I think I've only been to two of them," De Livier said. *Birriamen* "was not necessarily made to look like an Oriental *ramen,* per se. It was not driven by me going out to get some *ramen;* I just wanted amazing food."Indeed, *birriamen* is a distinctly Mexican creation that just so happens to have *ramen* noodles in it. He has experimented with a few other Mexican-Japanese flavor combinations, such as *udon* noodles in a black bean broth with Napa cabbage, roasted pork belly, pickled squash and yellow *chiles*. But the hybrid creations have to be balanced and make sense, De Livier said. "It's not just to look cute and put noodles on every Mexican soup."

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EDITORIAL OFFICES:
Benito Juárez Blvd. #23-100 Rosarito Mx
TEL (661) 612-1244 • (661)613-0551

SALES AGENT :
Rocio Palacios
e-mail: bajatimes@yahoo.com
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HOROSCOPES

By Lorraine R. Johnson

February 16-29, 2020

Welcome / *Bienvenidos* to the second part of February and welcome to Rosarito, Baja California. Baja California is still one of the friendliest and most beautiful Peninsulas in the world.

Can you believe it's almost Valentines Day and we are still experiencing some amazing sunny days with cozy chilly breezes in the evening? We continue to enjoy the aroma of amazing Mexican cuisine from local vendors and fabulous Restaurants,

We also have many Restaurants' that offer amazing food from all over the world. So check out our Restaurants. Hotels and resorts and gather your family and friends and head on down. You will have the time of your life. Remember that the Baja is great places to gather friends and family for a Romantic Valentine get away for you and your significant other. Good food, Romantic Moonlight walks, cool Ocean breeze and fabulous food.

Now let's see what's in store for you by checking out your Monthly sun signs. Bon appetite and we hope to see you soon, *Te veo pronto*. Happy Valentine day.

ARIES: (March 21--April 19)
Career: If you are retired find a community project that needs your creative magical touch.
Words of Wisdom: Be kind to yourself, you can't give what you don't have.
Romance: Set clear boundaries in the area of romance; don't let other's choose you. Romance is a mutual affair.
Finances: Start rebuilding your savings account, during the Holidays you had way too much fun spending.

Taurus: (April 20-May 20)
Career: Now is the time to invest in your passion. Remember all work and no play is hard on your peace of mind.
Words of Wisdom: take time to play.
Romance: If you have a partner plan a romantic get away; if you are single plan an amazing get away for yourself. You just might find what you are looking for in a mate.
Finances: Your investments are going to pay off soon.

GEMINI: (May 21- June 20)
Career: You are needed to participate in a community project or to help someone of need of your services/support. Go-ahead volunteering to help someone will fulfill you're your inner desire to give back.
Words Of Wisdom: Heads up, you are stressed out so now is the time to meditate on your future plans.
Romance: You are madly in love, go ahead and show it.
Finances: Share, it's a great feeling,

CANCER: (June 21-July 22)
Career: Now is the time to take a class that will fulfill your passion and hobby. Many of the local community colleges offer great adult continuing education classes. Go for it.
Words of Wisdom: You must never get tired of being the center of the family. You are the family leader. They need you.
Romance: Plan a romantic dinner for your family and friends. It's almost Valentine's Day. They will so appreciate you.
Finances: Yes, it's time to save for that special gift you want. That's right now!

LEO: (July 23-August 22)
Career: Well Lion now is time to take the lead. We need your roar and your protection.
Words Of Wisdom: Remember the Lion already knows he/she is the leader of he pack; you don't always have to roar.
Romance: Take care of both your family members and close friends.
Finances: You have been saving for several months now is the time to enjoy some of your resources.

Virgo: (August 23-September 21)
Career: No need to change anything in your life at this time, you are in perfect balance.
Words of Wisdom: Stay focused on your future goals and objectives.
Romance: Now is the time to analyze your romantic relationships.
Finances: Treat your self and family to a new toy, enjoy.

Libra: (September 22-October 22)
Career: Now is not the time to change anything in your life. Just continue doing what you are doing. You are amazing.
Words of wisdom: Take the time to appreciate your blessings.
Romance: Remember that which you are seeking is seeking you.
Finances: Start saving.

Scorpio: (October 23-November 21)
Career: You are bored so now is the time to take a class or start a new hobby.
Words of Wisdom: Have a spa day. Meditate and pray.
Romance: You are now receiving what you put out into the Universe. I hope you put out wonderful energy? If not remember what goes around comes around with more force. Ouch
Finances: You have been very generous to some who will take advantage of you, be careful.

Sagittarius: (November 22 - December 21)
Career: Volunteering suits your life style. Thank you for serving.
Words of wisdom: Be careful some of your friends are taking advantage of your kindness for weakness. Stay present.
Romance: You seem to never learn the difference between love, romance and physical needs. Stay present.
Finances: Continue to save.

Capricorn: (December 22 –January 19)
Career: Prepare yourself for a new opportunity coming your way from the work place or community service committee. Your skills are needed.
Words of wisdom: Continue to develop your emotional skills.
Romance: Be aware of your ability to deal with emotional relationships. Some are toxic.
Finances: You still are working on your financial management skills.

Aquarius: (January 20 – February 18)
Career: yes, you are very intelligent, but you must let others have an opportunity to have input. Everyone's opinion deserves to be heard. Remember you don't know everything. Just saying.
Words of wisdom: Take time to enjoy the fruits of your investments.
Romance: Do something romantic for yourself. You will feel amazing.
Finances: it's time to buy yourself some new clothes. You will feel great and look amazing.

Pisces: (February 19- March 20)
Career: You will be rewarded at the work place for your outstanding skills.
Words of wisdom: Be humble.
Romance: Plan a romantic dinner. It will be appreciated.
Finances: A big financial blessing is coming your way. Enjoy.

Lorraine R. Johnson Ph.D., L.C.S.W. lives in both the U.S. and Rosarito and she can be reached at the following email Drj@lifecoachingwithdrj.com

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Sipping Sugary Drinks? They Could Increase Your Risk of Death

Written by Kristian Dietz

If you frequently reach for a soda or sugary sweet tea to quench your thirst, it could be time to break this habit.

Consumption of drinks with added sugars has been associated with weight gain, obesity, hypertension and type 2 diabetes. Research also suggests that drinking too many sugary beverages—such as carbonated and noncarbonated sodas, fruit drinks and punches, energy drinks and sports drinks—is also associated with a greater risk of early death. This could be bad news if you're one of the nearly 50 percent of Americans who consume a sugar-sweetened beverage on any given day.

How many pre-sweetened drinks are too much? People who drink two or more glasses of any type of soda—sugary or diet—each day are at greater risk of death from any cause, according to a September 2019 study published in JAMA Internal Medicine.

For the study, researchers followed about 450,000 people from 10 different European countries for nearly two decades. None of the participants had heart disease, cancer or diabetes before they study began. The study found an association between a sugary soda habit and digestive disease, meaning the people who drank at least two glasses per day were more likely to develop a digestive disorder. The researchers noted that the spike in blood sugar levels triggered by sugar-sweetened sodas may affect insulin sensitivity and the healthy functioning of the gut and liver.

Another study published in March 2019 in the journal Circulation found that increased intake of sugar-sweetened beverages was linked to early mortality, primarily through cardiovascular disease and cancer. Researchers looked at the drink consumption of almost 38,000 men from the Health Professional's Follow-Up study (during 1986 to 2014) and more than 80,000 women from the Nurse's Health study (covering 1980 to 2014). They found that people who consumed two or more servings per day of sugar-sweetened drinks had a 31 percent increased risk of death from cardiovascular disease compared to those who drank these beverages less than once per month. Each serving per day of a sugar-sweetened beverage was associated with 10 percent higher risk of early CVD death.

The association with cancer was more modest, with a 16 percent greater risk of early mortality for those who drank more than two servings per day, compared to people who drank less than one per month. Among women, there was a link between sugar-sweetened beverage intake and breast cancer.When making any major dietary changes, keep your healthcare provider (HCP) in the loop. During your next physical, inform your HCP if you drink a lot of soda or other sugar-sweetened beverages so they can monitor your heart health.

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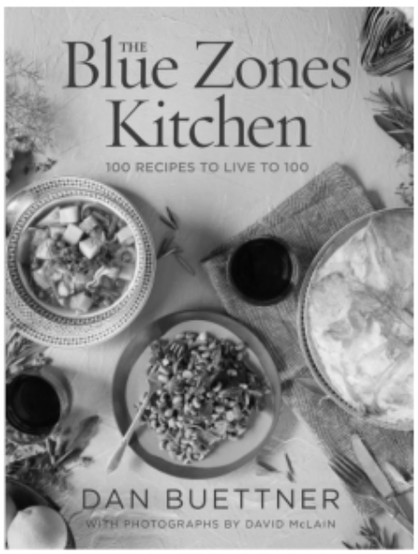
From Front Page...

Food to Live By

These traditional diets can lead to long lives



Meals developed over generations based on whole grains, greens, nuts, and beans offer the promise of eluding disease and staying healthy.

More than 14 years have passed since Dan Buettner first wrote about the world's longest-lived people for the magazine. Today he's still uncovering the secrets of centenarians in regions he calls the blue zones. He recently returned to four of them to learn more about the foods that contribute to this remarkable longevity, collecting time-tested recipes and investigating why certain foods seem to promote long lives.

Sardinia, Italy

Home to the world's highest concentration of male centenarians

Ninety-nine-year-old Assunta Podda vigorously stirs an earthen pot and flashes a toothy smile. "Minestrone," she explains with a swooping hand gesture.

I peer into the mélange of beans, carrots, onions, garlic, tomatoes, fennel, kohlrabi, herbs—all under a golden veneer of olive oil. Behind her, a shaft of evening light angles through a window and illuminates a table with a medieval spread: sourdough loaves, foraged greens, a carafe of garnet red wine.

"Sit," she insists, deploying the region's generous albeit predatory hospitality. I join her family and Gianni Pes, an epidemiologist who studies the region.

Podda's traditional embroidered blouse, filigreed necklace, and black sweater contrast sharply with her nimble movements: With the steady hand of a younger woman, she pours wine into stout glasses and ladles steaming soup into dishes.

"Now eat."

We're on the eastern slopes of Sardinia's Gennargentu mountains in Arzana, a village in a region with the world's highest concentration of male centenarians. In the years after World War II, 38 people in this village—one out of every 100 of their peers—have reached a century.

Pes discovered this phenomenon in the late 1990s. Since then, he's meticulously interviewed more than 300 centenarians, using extensive questionnaires. He believes that steep streets, zeal for family, reverence for elders, a matriarchal culture in which women bear most of the family stress, and a simple traditional diet explain much of this longevity. Pes says he's found that the spouses of centenarians live longer than the siblings of centenarians, suggesting to him that diet and lifestyle may make a bigger difference than genes.

Pes, who favors blue-framed glasses and a silver goatee, slurps a spoonful of soup. *"Delizioso!"* he proclaims, glancing admiringly at Podda, who closes her eyes and shrugs.

Minestrone serves up essential amino acids, a potpourri of vitamins, and a range of fibers. Pes has found that centenarians have specific strains of bacteria in their digestive systems that convert fiber into unusually high levels of odd-chain fatty acids. These saturated fats are associated with a lower risk of heart disease and may prevent cancer.

Cruciferous vegetables, like the cabbage and especially kohlrabi that find their way into almost every bowl of Sardinian minestrone, also may play a role. After observing the high percentage of centenarians with goiters—a condition that accompanies a low-functioning thyroid—Pes speculates that thiocyanate from a steady diet of kohlrabi may blunt thyroid function. That may help Sardinians live longer by reducing their rate of metabolism, Pes says, just as a lighter with a low flame lasts longer.

In Seùlo, another centenarian-blessed village, Pes and I visited a century-old community bakery. A dozen women were making the distinctive bread eaten with most meals. We watched them build a blazing fire in a brick bread oven and knead dough with strong arms, their faces flushed. The senior baker, a short, vigorous octogenarian named Regina Boi, hovered over the process in her black dress and head scarf, dispensing advice and signaling when the dough was ready and the oven hot enough.

Boi had provided the starter dough, a gooey froth resembling curdled milk that her family has cultivated for generations. The starter contains yeast and native Lactobacillus bacteria. The yeast and lactobacilli produce carbon dioxide that leavens the bread, and the lactobacilli also break down the carbohydrates to produce lactic acid. The acid imparts a sour taste, but more important, Pes tells me, the bread's carbohydrates enter the bloodstream 25 percent slower than those of plain white bread.

As dinner with Podda's family winds down with a spirited exchange of village gossip, Pes, in a flush of revelry, raises his glass and belts out the signature toast of the island, delivered in the local dialect: "A kent' annos!" "May you live to 100!"

"And may you be here to count the years!" the family bellows. A beat later, Podda softly repeats it. Indeed, since our dinner together, she's celebrated her 100th birthday.

Nicoya, Costa Rica

Adults here have the longest life expectancy in the Americas.

When Pes began his study of centenarians, he denoted areas with long-lived residents with blue marks on a map. He noticed such a profusion in Sardinia's Nuoro Province that he began to refer to the area as the "blue zone." I met Pes while canvassing the world in search of longevity hot spots, and I adopted his term for similar areas I uncovered: **Nicoya, Costa Rica;** the Greek island of **Ikaria;** Japan's **Okinawa** island; and a community of Seventh-day Adventists in Southern California. *(Loma Linda)*

I've examined dietary surveys of each region and inventoried their foods of the past century. Until the late 20th century, these diets consisted almost entirely of minimally processed plant-based foods—mostly whole grains, greens, nuts, tubers, and beans. People ate meat on average only five times a month. They drank mostly water, herbal teas, coffee, and some wine. Notably, they drank little or no cow's milk; soda pop was largely unknown to them. As globalization spreads, processed foods, animal products, and fast foods are supplanting the traditional diets. Not surprisingly, chronic diseases are on the rise in the blue zones.

A healthy diet is just one part of a web of longevity-promoting factors that also include having a circle of lifelong friends, a sense of purpose, an environment that nudges one into constant movement, and daily rituals that mitigate stress.

I found all of those factors in Costa Rica's Nicoya region, as well as what might be the world's healthiest breakfast, in an open-air building with a vaulted red-tiled roof blackened with smoke.

Every morning at daybreak in the city of Santa Cruz, María Elena Jiménez Rojas and a dozen or so other women at Coopetortilla stoke wood fires in long, clay ovens and stir cauldrons of spicy beans. Rojas, wearing a smudged apron over an immaculate white T-shirt, pinches off a golf ball–size piece of corn dough, plops it down on waxed paper, and rotates it with mechanical precision into a round patty. She slaps it onto a hot clay plate called a *comal,* where it roasts briefly before expanding into a puffy pancake and collapsing into a perfect *tortilla.*

Three women mix black beans with onions, red peppers, and herbs. The beans will cook to tender perfection and then be mixed with rice and sautéed bell peppers, onions, and garlic to produce a uniquely Costa Rican version of *gallo pinto.*

Nearly 30 years ago, Rojas tells me, the cooperative was just a *tortilla* shop. But young single mothers came to her for work, and she's helped dozens lift themselves out of poverty.

A few minutes before 6 a.m., the first customers file in. They sit on benches at long, green tables, where waitresses, wearing simple dresses and flip-flops, serve giant cups of weak coffee, plates of *gallo pinto,* and baskets of warm tortillas. As lilting *ranchera* music drifts in from a distant radio, customers fill their tortillas with beans, top them with hot sauce called *chilero,* and wash them down with black coffee, savoring a recipe for longevity reflecting thousands of years of culinary genius.

Costa Rica's blue zone is a roughly 30-mile-long strip that runs along the spine of the Nicoya Peninsula; it doesn't include the tourist resorts on the coast. The region consists mostly of dry pastureland and forests. Until about 50 years ago, people here were mostly subsistence farmers or ranch hands, supplementing a corn-and-bean diet with tropical fruits, garden vegetables, and, occasionally, wild game and fish.

The region's *Chorotega* people, who most influenced the diet, have been eating essentially the same food for millennia. That may help explain why adults here have the longest life expectancy in the Americas and men older than 60 have the lowest reliably measured rate of mortality for their age group in the world.

Corn *tortillas* might contribute to that longevity. They are an excellent source of grain, with complex carbohydrates rich in vitamins, minerals, and fiber. The wood ash the women add when they soak the corn breaks down the cell walls of the kernels and releases niacin—which helps control cholesterol.

Black beans contain the same pigment-based antioxidants found in blueberries. They're also rich in colon-cleansing fiber.

The magic comes in pairing corn with beans. Our bodies need nine amino acids—the building blocks of protein—to make muscle. Animal products such as meat, fish, and eggs provide all nine, but they also contain cholesterol and saturated fat. Together beans and corn provide all of these amino acids—with none of those unhealthy elements.

See next page...

From page 09...

Food to Live By

Researchers are looking into whether the combination may preserve cellular health too. Stanford social epidemiologist David Rehkopf and Costa Rican demographer Luis Rosero-Bixby have found that Nicoyans have longer telomeres on average than Costa Ricans overall. Telomeres are protective "caps" on the ends of DNA strands, which wear down over time, a rough marker of biological age. Rehkopf, who joined me in Costa Rica, told me that Nicoyans seem to be up to a decade younger biologically than their chronological age. Another group with longer than average telomeres? The poor—who may be more likely to subsist largely on beans, tortillas, chilero, and black coffee.

At Coopetortilla, I dig into my breakfast, chasing chilero-topped beans wrapped in fresh tortillas with gulps of coffee. Sweat beads on my forehead, and tears roll down my face. "Are you okay?" Rojas asks, flashing me a look of sincere concern. "Don't worry," I say. "These are tears of joy."

Okinawa, Japan

Residents are three times as likely to reach 100 as Americans.

Half a world away on Okinawa, I prepare to sample yet another contender for the world's healthiest breakfast at the Daiichi Hotel in Naha with Craig Willcox, another researcher seeking dietary clues to longevity.

On Okinawa, as compared with the United States, residents are three times as likely to reach 100, women suffer about half the rate of breast cancer, both sexes are afflicted by a third to a quarter the rate of heart disease, and elderly people die from Alzheimer's dementia at a tenth to a twelfth the rate.

Each morning the hotel founder, Yoshiko Shimabukuro, 91, a short energetic woman, and her daughter Katsue Watanabe, a certified vegetable sommelier, prepare plant-based dishes from some 50 ingredients, about half of which are unique to Okinawa. Before us, in appetizer-size plates and bowls, lies a starburst of colorful foods, many of which helped create what remains, by several measures, the world's longest-lived population despite a decline in the health of younger generations.

Willcox, an anthropologist and gerontologist, points out that everything in this 20-course meal—including *tofu* soup, carrot salad, a boiled fern called *otani-watari,* and papaya stir-fry—is light on calories. Okinawan food, he tells me, is nutritionally dense and calorically poor, while in the U.S. it's the reverse.

With his twin, Bradley, and their mentor, Makoto Suzuki, Willcox has written books that lay out most of what we know about the island's traditional diet. The brothers showed up in Okinawa in 1994 interested in studying centenarians and hooked up with Suzuki. For a quarter century the trio has chronicled what people here eat and investigated why it helps them elude disease. Now I'm getting a hands-on lesson.

Willcox points a chopstick at a *tofu* stir-fry with sea green crescents of *goya*, or bitter melon, a key ingredient in *goya champuru,* a classic Okinawan dish. *Goya* is high in vitamins A and C, folate, and powerful antioxidant compounds that can help protect your cells against damage, he says. It's anticancer, protective of liver and cell membranes, a free radical scavenger, inhibiting of bacteria such as E. coli, and capable of lowering blood sugar. I bite down on a piece, unleashing a flavor explosion redolent of chewing a mouthful of aspirin—only more piquant. As with beer, which people often don't like at first, the bitter taste grows on you.

With a tuft of sandy brown hair and round spectacles that make him look like a middle-aged Harry Potter, Willcox moves on to the *tofu,* which is denser and more cheeselike than other Japanese *tofu*. As the protein centerpiece of the daily Okinawan diet, it often replaces less healthy proteins, such as meat or eggs. Traditionally made with seawater, Okinawan *tofu* is rich in calcium, magnesium, zinc, and other minerals that most Americans lack in their diet. It's also high in genistein and in daidzein, which metabolizes into equol. Genistein and equol are isoflavonoids that Willcox notes are associated with reducing the risk for cancer and cardiovascular disease.

Willcox hoists a porcelain cup containing a bright yellow brew. "*Turmeric* tea," he says. He takes a sputtering sip and explains that dozens of studies have shown the active ingredient in turmeric can help our bodies protect against diseases, including cancer, heart disease, and dementia. Islanders have co-opted the Japanese trick of using pungent flavors, such as turmeric, to enhance the taste of healthy vegetables. Most recipes rely on dashi, a rich broth commonly made from bonito flakes or sea kelp. *Dashi* can convert a pile of vegetables into an explosion of deliciousness, resulting in a dish with fewer calories than a hamburger but with five times the nutrients—and it tastes good enough to eat every day.

As I fill up my plate with more delicacies, Willcox fixes on a glutinous mass of seaweed resembling green spaghetti. Islanders consume more than a dozen varieties of seaweed, which he calls "sea vegetables." This particular one, *mozuku,* boasts an abundance of fucoidan, an anticancer, antiviral compound that Willcox says may help reverse inflammation, manage blood sugar, and also grow blood vessels.

Even more intriguing, another compound in seaweeds, called astaxanthin, has been linked to a gene that, when activated, seems to tell cells to clean up waste and reduce inflammation, which are at the root of the majority of age-related diseases.

After two hours of learning and eating, I regard the sea of empty dishes. "I feel like a total glutton," I say. "Don't feel guilty," Willcox replies. **Our whole meal, he explains, contained fewer than 600 calories—about the same as eating a big cookie**

Loma Linda, California

Adventists who follow a vegetarian diet tend to live longer than those who eat meat.

The final stop on my journey is Loma Linda, California, where a community of Seventh-day Adventists has long followed a diet inspired by the Bible. Their guidelines originate from passages such as Genesis 1:29: "And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat."

Adventists who follow the diet tend to live longer. **One study showed that life expectancy for Adventists in California was 7.3 years greater for men and 4.4 years greater for women than for similar Californians. Being both vegetarian and Adventist boosted life expectancy by an additional two years.**

When I asked researchers studying the diet to find someone who follows it, they sent me to 90-year-old Dorothy Nelson, who answers her door wearing a bright red T-shirt and running shoes, with schoolgirl bangs cut just above her hazel eyes. She welcomes me and leads me to her well-lit kitchen.

Moving with the energy of a Chihuahua, Nelson begins cooking a savory lunch. When I compliment her cooking, she reveals her secret: "This kitchen is seasoned with love."

Over lunch she tells me about her life. When she was younger, she'd had an adventurous career as a pilot-nurse for church missions. Once, while she and her copilot were hopscotching across the Arctic, the plane's engine sputtered, and they plummeted toward the earth, spotting a flat area on an ice floe between Canada and Greenland at the last minute. She figured they'd be all right, "as long as the good Lord wants me around," she recalls. When the plane touched down, it skidded but stayed upright. "I got out and knelt down and thanked the Lord."

The half-frozen pair were picked up five days later. The rescuers gave them hot coffee. "I'd never tasted coffee," she says. Caffeine and alcohol are discouraged for Adventists. Today Nelson limits her adventures to tending her vegetable garden.

As a proponent of vegetarian ways, Nelson is a direct culinary descendant of Ellen G. White, who helped found what became the Seventh-day Adventist Church, a Protestant denomination. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, White first articulated the dietary prescriptions that have since guided this subculture of long-lived Americans.

White praised the consumption of whole grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables, which "impart a strength, a power of endurance, and a vigor of intellect, that are not afforded by a more complex and stimulating diet." She warned against cooking with grease, spices, and salt, among other things, and discouraged the use of sugar, which "causes fermentation and this clouds the brain and brings peevishness into the disposition." Her recommendations seem remarkably prescient, mirroring today's dietary guidelines from the American Cancer Society and the American Heart Association.

Most of the newest insights on the Adventist diet come from Gary Fraser, an Adventist and researcher at Loma Linda University, and a vegetarian who sometimes eats fish. With his combed-over sandy brown hair, Fraser looks a bit like a scoutmaster. Trained as a doctor, he noticed that Adventists had healthier hearts than non-Adventists, and he began to wonder whether science could validate his diet's health claims. He now leads the Adventist Health Studies, which have monitored the health of tens of thousands of American Adventists.

Their research indicates that, at a given age, vegetarian Adventists are about 12 percent less likely to die than nonvegetarian ones who eat only a small amount of meat. By contrast, among younger Adventists, those who eat the most meat suffer a 46 percent higher rate of premature death than those who get their protein from nuts, seeds, and legumes. "It's clear that a plant-based diet is the way to go," Fraser says.

When I smell Nelson's cooking, I'm inclined to agree. The aromas wafting from her stove make me hungry. After combining black beans with steamed cabbage and cauliflower, she adds slices of browned *tofu,* sesame seeds, and a dash of soy sauce. It's a satisfying mix of complex carbs, protein, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, with fewer calories than a bag of french fries. "I've never tasted meat," Nelson brags.

She tells me she has perfect blood pressure and a resting heart rate of 60. She walks three miles a day.

And there you have it: The vast majority of the calories eaten in the traditional diets in the blue zones come from plant-based whole foods. **Grains, greens, nuts, and beans are the four pillars of every longevity diet on Earth.**

Nearly half the people who die this year in the U.S. will likely do so from cardiovascular disease, cancer, or diabetes. In blue zones, far fewer suffer from these diseases. Why? For most of their lives, they've simply eaten what was readily available and, luckily for them, it was a whole food, plant-based diet. Trial and error yielded recipes that make these foods taste delicious enough to eat day after day. Therein, perhaps, lies the secret to a healthier you. If you want a good starter recipe, I know a feisty centenarian who makes a mean minestrone.

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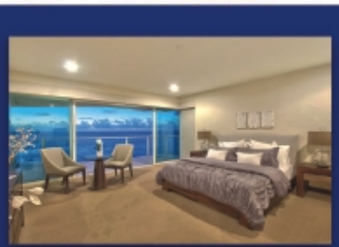
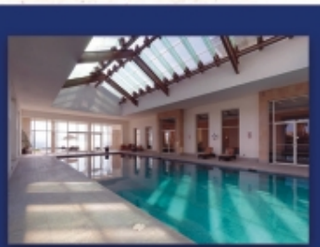
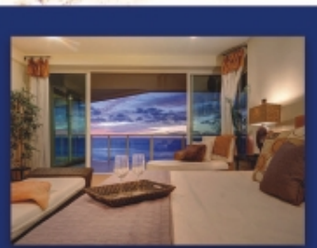

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palacio@bajaopenhouse.net
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