

[IMAGE]

The World's Healthiest Habits

By Editorial Staff

Most of the world views Americans as overweight and addicted to fast food. Compared to countries such as China and France, for example, our dietary habits are poor, at best. Here are five healthy habits we can learn from other cultures around the world, courtesy of CNN.

HABIT 1

Infuse your diet with produce and whole grains

Countries Embracing This Habit: China and Greece

Research confirms that three servings or more a day of produce can lower the risk of stroke, heart disease and some cancers. The USDA diet and nutrition guidelines recommend consuming between five and 13 servings of fruit and vegetables a day. As a general rule, try to fill two-thirds of your plate with produce and whole-grain foods, and the remaining third with fish or meat.

HABIT 2

Savor leisurely dining

Countries Embracing This Habit: Italy, France, Spain, Greece, Japan

Meals in these countries generally span several hours and are divided into multiple courses. Sitting down to eat is about more than food; it's about quality time with friends and family, and savoring the scent, texture and flavor of food.

A green apple made to look like the Earth. - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark **HABIT 3**

Exercise portion control

Countries Embracing This Habit: France, Japan

People around the world eat many of the same foods as Americans; where Americans go wrong is with portion size. An average meal in France is 25 percent smaller than one in America. Okinawans stop eating when they are 80 percent full. Part of the difference comes from using smaller plates and choosing filling,

fiber-rich foods such as lentils and vegetables.

HABIT 4

Eat a variety of unprocessed, fresh foods

Countries Embracing This Habit: Italy, France, Greece, Japan, USA

Shopping in countries like France and Italy often involves several stops to local markets, the butcher or the baker for fresh, whole foods, as opposed to the typical American one-stop supermarket with aisles of processed options. Fresh foods provide more fiber, fewer calories and saturated and trans fats, and less salt and sugar.

HABIT 5

Spice up your plate

Countries Embracing This Habit: India, China, USA, Thailand

In addition to adding flavor without the calories or fat, herbs such as garlic, thyme and rosemary, and spices like cinnamon, cloves and turmeric may fight disease. In the U.S., we have many ethnic restaurants that use world spices, or you can grow your own windowsill herb garden and incorporate them into the meals you already make at home.

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