



LIFE WELL LIVED

The shared secrets of centenarians living in the Earth's blue zones have intrigued the world as prominent photographers seek to illustrate the essence of longevity

Synonymous with purpose, health and vitality, the world's blue zones have captured the curiosity of photographers and journalists for decades. National Geographic Fellow, explorer, and best-selling Author Dan Buettner is renowned for identifying the Earth's blue zones and spent over two decades alongside medical researchers, anthropologists and demographers to uncover the secrets of centenarians living and thriving in Sardinia, Italy; Okinawa, Japan; Nicoya, Costa Rica; Ikaria, Greece; and Loma Linda, California.

David McLain's prominent career as a National Geographic Photographer highlights the power of visual storytelling. In 2004, McLain joined Dan Buettner on an assignment to discover the world's oldest, healthiest people. Exploring cultures of longevity, the cover story was illustrated with a series of aspirational images of people in their twilight years living within blue zones. Written by Buettner, "The Secrets of Long Life" became one of the best-selling National Geographic magazines. The duo's collaboration continues today with the recent publication of The New York Times best-selling cookbook: "Blue Zones Kitchen," with the much-anticipated sequel set for release in December 2022, titled "The Blue Zones American Kitchen: 100 Recipes to Live to 100." Based in the U.S., Filmmaker McLain is also a founding member of Sony's Artisans of Imagery program and represents Changemaker Talent as a thought leader.

Italian-born Photographer and Videographer Gianluca Colla is known for his strong and vibrant imagery, published by National Geographic Magazine, Condé Nast Traveler, The New York Times, and The Washington Post. Covering landscape, wildlife and portraiture photography, Colla's recent work includes a notable portfolio of color images capturing the longest-living centenarians in the world. In his series "Longevity Secrets," Colla explores the lives of senior citizens in the Earth's blue zones to show the connection between longer life, health and habits in some of the most exceptional regions on the planet.



*In Greece, the longest-lived
Ikarians exercise mindlessly
by just gardening, walking
to their neighbors house or
doing their own yard work*

Ikaria, Greece



IMAGES left page (all) © Gianluca Colla, right page (above left and right) © Gianluca Colla, right page (bottom) © David McLain

Above: Studies have shown that people who nap regularly, like Ikarians, have up to 35% lower chances of dying from heart disease

Below (left): Fostering social connections has been shown to benefit the overall health and longevity of Ikarian community members

Below (right): Ikarians eat a variation of the Mediterranean diet, with lots of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, potatoes, and olive oil





Nicoya, Costa Rica



Above (left): For most of their lives, Nicoyan centenarians ate a traditional light dinner early in the evening, including squash, corn and beans

Above (right): Nicoyans have regular sun exposure, which helps their bodies produce vitamin D for strong bones and healthy body function

Left: Centenarians from Nicoya seem to have enjoyed physical work all their lives, and they find joy in everyday physical chores



Okinawa, Japan



Above (left): Okinawans' purpose-imbued lives give them clear roles of responsibility and feelings of being needed well into their 100s

Above (right): For most of their lives, Okinawan centenarians have eaten a nutrient-rich plant-based diet, including stir-fried vegetables, sweet potatoes and tofu

Left: By forming a moai, Okinawans benefit from stress-shedding security and are assured by the support of their community members



Left: Like Sardinian shepherds, walking five miles daily provides cardiovascular benefits and positively affects muscle and bone metabolism

Below (right): As shown in Sardinia, people who live in strong, healthy families suffer lower rates of depression, suicide and stress

Below (left): Sardinian Cannonau wine is attributed to lower stress levels, with two or three times the level of artery-scrubbing flavonoids as other wines



Sardinia, Italy

