

# Countries With The Lowest Dementia Rates Follow These 8 Food Secrets

Living longer we may be, but record numbers of people are experiencing cognitive decline and dementia.

In fact, in mid-November, Brits woke up to the scary headline that dementia is now the leading cause of death in England and Wales. How long will it be before such headlines appear in the USA?

And yet some populations in the world not only live long, healthy lives, but remain cognitively healthy too. What do they know that we don't?

## Which Regions Have the Healthiest Brains?

The habitats of the world's longest-lived, healthiest, most dementia-free people range from the Okinawa islands of Japan to the Nicoya area of Costa Rica, the PACA region of southeastern France or the adjacent Liguria district of northwest Italy — with other pockets of exceptional health located in Greece, Spain, Central and South America.

Just from reading that list, you can see that their lifestyles, cuisines and cultures vary greatly, **but don't be misled: all of them have seven dietary factors in common.** Following their example might be a good idea.

According to Preston W. Estep, author of *The Mindspan Diet*, this is what they eat. . .

**1. Consume relatively low animal protein and less red meat.** High dementia populations eat 140 grams of protein a day, of which two-thirds comes from animal sources. Low dementia populations eat a third less protein, and this is split equally between animal and plant sources. They also drink less milk.

**2. Routinely eat moderate amounts of fish.** Less than one percent of calorie intake in the US comes from fish compared with one one-and-a-half percent in the Mediterranean and five percent in Japan.

**3. Fat intake is mainly monounsaturated, and the ratio of omega 6 to omega 3 fats is low.** In typical Western diets the omega 6 to omega 3 ratio is 15 to 1. It is considerably lower in the diets of the countries and regions on the super-healthy list. They consume much less polyunsaturated fat from seed oils and more omega 3 from fish. While fat intake in this group varies from less than 10% of calories to well over 40%, it is mainly in the form of monounsaturated oils. High quantities of olive oil are used in the Mediterranean, while the Japanese use much lower amounts of cold pressed canola oil for low temperature stir-frying.

**4. Beans.** People in the super-healthy regions eat more of these fiber-rich foods, which are also a good sources of plant protein and contain healthy ratios of omega 6 to omega 3 fats.

**5. Fermented, pickled and preserved foods.** Up to 30% of their calorie intake comes from foods that support gut bacteria. This is double the amount eaten in the US. The French and Italians enjoy wine, vinegar, grass-fed cheese and yogurt. In traditional Japanese cuisine, miso, natto, rice vinegar, soy sauce, sake, and pickled vegetables/fish are widely consumed.

**6. An abundance of vegetables, greens and herbs.** In the Mediterranean these includes Swiss chard, escarole (endive), purslane, leeks and onions. Herbs include basil, thyme and oregano. Japanese eat plenty of seaweeds and sea vegetables.

**7. Tea, coffee and red wine are drunk with meals.** This a feature of all the world's pockets of exceptional health. In Japan, green tea is usually drunk at every meal. Italians are more likely to drink coffee or red wine. Costa Ricans indulge in coffee. The French enjoy them all. Drinking with meals helps to restrict iron absorption. Excess iron has been linked to Alzheimer's and many other degenerative diseases.

**8. Curry, Kumurin, Tumeric and other spices prevent and treat Alzheimer's**

### **Appreciate Your Meals**

One other valuable tip to take from these long-lived and cognitively-healthy populations is that when it comes to eating, they take their time. Slower eaters tend to eat less, are less hungry and are slimmer than fast eaters.

In Japan, traditional meals are methodical and unhurried. Mealtimes are also leisurely in the Mediterranean.

So avoid gulping down your food. Take your time and savor each moment.



## **Where are the Lowest Rates of Alzheimer's in the World?**

Written By [Michael Greger M.D. FACLM](#) on November 12th, 2015

The rates of dementia [differ](#) greatly around the world, from the lowest rates in Africa, India, and South Asia, to the highest rates in Western Europe and especially North America. Is it all just genetics? Well, the incidence of dementia and Alzheimer's disease is [significantly lower](#)

for Africans in Nigeria than for African Americans in Indianapolis, for example—up to five times lower.

Alzheimer's [rates](#) of Japanese-Americans living in the U.S. are closer to that of Americans than to Japanese. When people move from their homeland to the United States, Alzheimer's rates can increase dramatically. Therefore, when Africans or Asians live in the United States and adopt a Western diet, their increase in Alzheimer's risk [suggests](#) that it's not genetics.

Unfortunately, one doesn't have to move to the West to adopt a Western diet. The prevalence of dementia in Japan has [shot up](#) over the last few decades. Mechanisms to explain this in Japan include increases in cholesterol, saturated fat, and iron from increases in the consumption of animal products. Traditional diets are generally weighted toward vegetable products such as grains and away from animal products. But since 1960, the diet in Japan has changed from a more traditional rice-based diet to one with a preponderance of meat. From 1961 to 2008, meat and animal fat increased considerably, whereas the rice supply dropped. The dietary factor most strongly [associated](#) with the rise in Alzheimer's disease in Japan was the increased consumption of animal fat.

A similar analysis in China [arrived](#) at the same conclusion. As the authors of the Japan study (highlighted in the video, **Alzheimer's Disease: Grain Brain or Meathead?**) [note](#), on the basis of these findings, the rate of Alzheimer's disease and dementia will "continue to rise unless dietary patterns change to those with less reliance on animal products." This is consistent with data showing those who eat vegetarian [appear](#) two to three times less likely to become demented, and the longer one eats meat-free, the lower the associated risk of dementia.

Globally, the lowest validated rates of Alzheimer's in the world are rural India, where they [eat](#) low meat, high grain, high bean, high carb diets. It's possible that the apparent protective association between rice and Alzheimer's is due to the fact that the drop of rice consumption was accompanied by a rise in meat consumption, but other population studies have found that dietary grains [appear](#) strongly protective in relation to Alzheimer's disease. In other words, perhaps, don't pass on the grain, but "[pass the grain to spare the brain.](#)"



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# Indian village may hold key to beating dementia –

## Psst – They eat a lot of CURRY

**Ballabgarh in northern India has unusually low levels of Alzheimer's disease. More than 820,000 people in the UK are living with dementia, a number that is expected to double by 2051. Is there anything that can be learnt from this region to slow the trend?**

As the sun breaks through the morning mist in Ballabgarh, the elders of the village make their way to their regular meeting spot to exchange stories and share a traditional hookah pipe.

These men are in their sixties and seventies, while their faces bear the evidence of years of hard work in the fields, their minds are still sharp.



In other parts of the world, people of their age would be at some risk of developing dementia. But here, Alzheimer's disease is rare. In fact, scientists believe recorded rates of the condition in this small community are lower than anywhere else in the world.

Enjoying a chat, the elders are still on the ball

76-year-old Parshadi Lal says: "I feel good, I feel healthy, I have a walk every morning, even though my knees do now give me a bit of trouble." His friends nod in agreement.

### Record low rates

Researchers from the University of Pittsburgh spent several years studying over-55s in this area.

They tested more than 5,000 people for Alzheimer's disease, using screening processes designed to fit in with local culture, and relevant for people who could not read or write.

They wanted to be sure they did not miss any cases of the condition.

It is an area where people do not tend to live as long as they do in wealthier, more developed areas, so you would expect rates of Alzheimer's disease to be lower.



But even after the scientists factored in the lower life expectancy of people in this area, the

rate of Alzheimer's disease was significantly below those in the UK - and less than a third of those in parts of the US.

"We had a hunch that rates here would be lower," says Dr Vijay Chandra, one of the study authors. In fact, they found what appeared to be among the lowest rates of the condition ever recorded by scientists.

So what is it about the people of Ballabgarh that is protecting them from a condition that affects about 36 million people worldwide?

### Gene search

Dr Chandra told me they tested people to see whether fewer of them carried the APO4E gene, which predisposes people to Alzheimer's disease. They did not.

When compared to people living in a community in Pennsylvania, US, they found almost exactly the same proportion carried the gene.

But in contrast with lives in Pennsylvania and other parts of the world, the people of Ballabgarh are unusually healthy. It is a farming community, so most of them are very physically active and most eat a low-fat, vegetarian diet. Obesity is virtually unheard of.



A farming community means

Life in this fertile farming community is also low in stress, everyone is physically active and family support is still strong, unlike in other, more urban parts of India.

"It all leads to a happy body, and a happy mind and hopefully a happy brain," says Dr Chandra.

"Cholesterol levels here are much lower. We believe that is what is protecting the community."

Life in Ballabgarh could not be more different from the complicated, stressful existence many of us lead in the rest of the world. But perhaps this community has something to teach us.



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## [N WORLD HEALTH MENU](#)

Death Rate Per 100,000

Age Standardized

SELECT CAUSE

HIGH

LOW

Clear

		MALE BOTH FEMALE				
1	Finland	65.70	62 Luxembourg	21.17	123 Niger	14.66
2	Kuwait	58.17	63 Central Africa	21.14	124 India	14.57
3	Turkey	51.11	64 Slovakia	20.83	125 Congo	14.52
4	Saudi Arabia	49.94	65 Turkmenistan	20.69	126 Cyprus	14.33
5	United Kingdom	49.18	66 Laos	20.64	127 Guinea-Bissau	14.11
6	Tunisia	46.99	67 Nepal	20.52	128 Liberia	14.02
7	Libya	46.34	68 Dominican Rep.	20.20	129 Vanuatu	13.82
8	United States	44.41	69 Viet Nam	20.18	130 South Korea	13.67
9	Syria	42.39	70 Barbados	20.16	131 Chad	13.50
10	Lebanon	41.44	71 Indonesia	19.96	132 Botswana	13.47
11	Bahrain	40.42	72 Albania	19.92	133 South Africa	13.28
12	Netherlands	39.37	73 China	19.87	134 Malta	13.14
13	Myanmar	38.49	74 Italy	19.81	135 Czech Republic	12.96
14	Jordan	38.47	75 Timor-Leste	19.64	136 Sao Tome	12.65
15	Iceland	38.28	76 Azerbaijan	19.58	137 Eritrea	12.54
16	Morocco	36.85	77 Seychelles	19.55	138 South Sudan	12.23
17	Sweden	36.37	78 Comoros	19.46	139 Lesotho	12.03
18	Switzerland	36.17	79 Tajikistan	19.25	140 Fiji	11.99
19	Iran	35.41	80 Angola	19.24	141 Croatia	11.77
20	Yemen	35.22	81 Micronesia	19.09	142 New Guinea	11.47
21	Norway	32.58	82 Bolivia	19.02	143 Zambia	11.47
22	Canada	32.30	83 Malawi	18.82	144 Grenada	11.18
23	Algeria	31.43	84 Israel	18.81	145 Guinea	11.15
24	Greece	31.29	85 Sri Lanka	18.69	146 Somalia	11.04
25	Sudan	30.95	86 Rwanda	18.14	147 Austria	10.87
26	France	30.84	87 Mauritania	18.12	148 Swaziland	10.79
27	Belgium	30.62	88 Gambia	18.11	149 Brazil	10.71
28	Australia	29.61	89 Mongolia	18.05	150 Brunei	10.54
29	Spain	29.23	90 Cambodia	18.00	151 Madagascar	10.51
30	Arab Emirates	29.01	91 Argentina	17.84	152 Bangladesh	10.17
31	Denmark	28.69	92 Portugal	17.57	153 Costa Rica	9.96
32	Ireland	28.46	93 Kenya	17.48	154 Serbia	9.65
33	Egypt	27.88	94 Cape Verde	17.47	155 Bahamas	8.48
34	Qatar	27.69	95 Samoa	17.42	156 Belize	8.00
35	Nicaragua	27.08	96 DR Congo	17.36	157 Trinidad/Tob.	7.64
36	Bosnia/Herzeg.	26.81	97 Germany	16.99	158 Japan	7.22
37	Peru	26.28	98 Bhutan	16.87	159 Russia	6.69
38	Oman	25.52	99 Burundi	16.86	160 Jamaica	6.28

39 El Salvador	25.49	100 Mali	16.84	161 Panama	5.60
40 Iraq	25.24	101 Honduras	16.83	162 Latvia	5.38
41 New Zealand	25.07	102 Ghana	16.47	163 Antigua/Bar.	5.34
42 Montenegro	24.75	103 Benin	16.24	164 Romania	4.76
43 Afghanistan	24.53	104 Togo	15.93	165 Lithuania	4.54
44 Paraguay	24.01	105 North Korea	15.86	166 Estonia	4.50
45 Malaysia	23.73	106 Burkina Faso	15.78	167 Ecuador	4.47
46 Kiribati	23.52	107 Chile	15.75	168 Saint Vincent	4.43
47 Poland	23.31	108 Tanzania	15.69	169 Slovenia	3.88
48 Gabon	23.28	109 Solomon Isl.	15.65	170 Mexico	3.62
49 Tonga	22.84	110 Senegal	15.58	171 Guatemala	3.61
50 Maldives	22.66	111 Uganda	15.42	172 Moldova	3.07
51 Haiti	22.46	112 Pakistan	15.35	173 Guyana	2.97
52 Georgia	22.25	113 Mozambique	15.27	174 Venezuela	2.76
53 Suriname	22.19	114 Ethiopia	15.22	175 Saint Lucia	2.69
54 Belarus	22.17	115 Djibouti	15.16	176 Ukraine	2.67
55 Armenia	21.91	116 Hungary	15.14	177 Colombia	2.42
56 Thailand	21.84	117 Zimbabwe	15.12	178 Mauritius	2.35
57 Equ. Guinea	21.78	118 Cote d Ivoire	15.10	179 Uzbekistan	1.92
58 Cuba	21.76	119 Namibia	14.86	180 Macedonia	1.86
59 Kazakhstan	21.74	120 Sierra Leone	14.85	181 Philippines	1.74
60 Uruguay	21.55	121 Cameroon	14.82	182 Kyrgyzstan	1.21
61 Bulgaria	21.26	122 Nigeria	14.77	183 Singapore	0.40



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