

## LIFESTYLE

Put a pep in your step with our handy tips tricks to a more fashionable and healthier you



# Beyond Surviving, Thriving!



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If you're interested in enhancing your quality of life as you age, read on!

Energy levels tend to decline as we age. We are effectively slowly deteriorating from youth to old age as we become more susceptible to the negative effects of stress, physically, mentally and emotionally.

But don't allow this notion to let you rest on your laurels. It is a fact of life that we age, but we can slow down this process and improve our quality of life by changing how we deal with the stressors.

Why do certain cultures enjoy longer life expectancies than others? Various hotspots around the world have been identified in a worldwide study undertaken by the National Geographic, and some of the best longevity researchers in the U.S. These areas have been named Blue Zones, where it's not uncommon to see people living active healthy lives beyond 100 years. The original zones are namely The Italian island of Sardinia, the Greek Island of Ikaria ("the island where people forget to die"), Loma Linda in California (home to the 7th day Adventists), Okinawa in Japan and Nicoya Peninsula in Costa Rica.

Here are some common denominators to explore, besides their sandy beaches and turquoise seas.

- Less stress and more socialising
- Strong emphasis on family
- Fresh natural plant based diet
- Very little red meat
- Daily exercise
- Living their lives with a sense of purpose
- Strong spiritual belief system

This is, in other words, the naturopathic way of living. There's nothing too difficult to achieve

here, a balanced way of life, where people respect themselves and their surroundings.

So, although 30% of our life expectancy is down to genetics, the other 70% is up to us!

We can do much for ourselves to slow down this ageing process through good nutrition and the use of plant medicine.

We see from above that a fresh plant based diet is the way to go, but why is this? Plants as our primary food and provide us with numerous phytochemicals, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Antioxidants are top of the list of specific anti-ageing ingredients as they offset free radical damage to the cells. Research now verifies that plant based diets reduce our risk of degenerative diseases and provide our cells with fuel for renewal, protection and optimum functioning.

What is of equal importance is the reduction of stress in our daily lives. It is as much a physical metabolic process as it is an emotional one. Stress will basically interfere with how your body metabolises your food into energy. Even if you are eating a great diet, you may not be absorbing all those wonderful nutrients due to the stress levels in your body, leaving you tired and irritable.

So we do need to take the foot off the gas a little, breath and relax, learn to laugh at ourselves and take time out to socialise with others. Herbal medicine has a bounty of plants that help us adapt to the stressors around us. Sometimes we cannot change a situation but we can change our way of dealing with it. Categories that are of importance here include Adaptogens, Nervines and Bitters.

Adaptogens: are numerous and help our endocrine systems bring a balance back into our lives, support the adrenal glands and enhance our immune activity, strengthening us from the core. Ones I use commonly in my clinic are Ashwagandha, Damiana, Siberian Ginseng, Shatavari, Reishi, and Tulsi.

Nervines: are a category that support our nervous system, help us to unwind, also relax our musculoskeletal system and our digestion. Some of my favourites are Skullcap, Oats, Passionflower and Valerian.

Bitters: These are herbs which stimulate the bitter receptors on the tongue, thereby stimulating a cascade of digestive secretions through the gastro-intestinal tract. Our native Dandelion root is a fine example of this type of herb.

Each herb has an affinity with different aspects and areas of our body. It is short sighted to pin an ailment to a single herb, because that single herb will have numerous actions from the various phytochemicals therein, that will exert some physiological change within the body and may interact positively or negatively with other herbs and/or medications.

Because we all react differently to our various stressors it can be useful to get a personalised plan from a Herbalist who will help in deciphering which herbs may suit best for your constitution.

Always check with your Herbalist or GP when on any medications.



## 6 HOUR SLOW BRAISED LAMB SHANK CARROT AND CUMIN PUREE SMOKED FONDANT POTATO AND SWEET PORT JUS

Seal the lamb shank on a hot pan season with salt and pepper, once it has been nicely browned place into an oven proof dish. Add 1 diced onion, 100mls of red wine, 200g tin of chopped tomatoes, 2 bay leaves, 2 sprigs of thyme, 1 roughly chopped carrot and stick of celery. Cover with lid and slowly braise for 5 to 6 hours at 150oc checking every couple of hours.

### CARROT AND CUMIN PUREE

Boil 3 chopped carrots with 200mls of boiling water and salt and pepper

until the carrots are soft and tender once cooked drain of the water and add 20g of ground cumin salt and pepper 2 table spoons of honey and 20g of chopped fresh dill and blitz to a smooth consistency adding a little cream if necessary.

In a large pot boil 200mls of beef stock, 200mls of red wine, 50g of castor sugar, 2 tablespoons of tomato puree, whisk all the ingredients together and bring to the boil add 4 tablespoons of corn flour diluted with water to slightly thicken the sauce season and taste.

### POTATO FONDANT

Take 2 whole rooster potatoes, top and tail them. Once that's done you can square off the potatoes. Place into a tray with 100g of butter, 50mls of boiling water, salt and pepper and 2 sprigs of fresh thyme. Cook in the oven for 30 minutes until tender.

### TO PRESENT

Heat the puree through and drag a nice spoon full along the plate. Sit the slow braised lamb shank on top of the puree next to the fondant and drizzle over the smooth red wine jus and serve straight away.



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