



ICELAND
Eat fish at least twice a week

FRANCE
Have a glass of red wine

SPAIN
Take an afternoon siesta

GREECE
Cook with olive oil and veggies

GAMBIA
Get your protein from peanuts



healthy habits

FROM MOMS ALL

OVER THE WORLD

Globe-trotting tricks that can help you stress less, shed pounds, and live happier

By Maridel Reyes
Photographs by Heather Weston

The moment your baby burst onto the scene, you gladly traded in your weekender tote for a diaper bag and your passport for a paci. But travel makes for more than fun photos: Seeing the way people live their lives in other cultures—and following their lead—may help you and your family be healthier, says Dan Buettner, author of *The Blue Zones: Lessons for Living Longer From the People Who've Lived the Longest*. Fortunately, you don't have to be a member of the jet set to reap these rewards. We uncovered six so-simple lifestyle secrets from around the planet; follow these world-class tips to lose weight, boost your mood, and raise a baby who is fit from the start.



France: Pop a Cork

► **French women savor a glass of wine at least several times a week**, preferably red or Champagne, which both have health benefits, according to Mireille Guiliano, author of *French Women Don't Get Fat*. Taking a tippie may also help you stay slim once you've lost the baby weight. Women who drink moderately are less likely to put on pounds over time, according to a study from Brigham and Women's Hospital, in Boston. The researchers speculate that this could be because drinking may give women a slight metabolism boost.

TRY IT AT HOME Unwind with your hubby over a single glass of wine at the end of the day to connect and toast your health. Go for cabernet sauvignon or other tannic red wines from southwestern France; these wines can have levels of heart-helping procyanins (antioxidants that strengthen weak blood vessels and protect against hardening of the arteries) that are five times higher than those in other wines, research in *Nature* reports.

Boozing is a no-go while pregnant, but you can drink responsibly while nursing, says Thomas W. Hale, Ph.D., a professor of pediatrics at Texas Tech University School of Medicine in Amarillo and author of *Medications and Mothers' Milk*. Rule of thumb: Wait two hours to breastfeed for each drink you consume. "It takes that long for the alcohol to work its way out of your system—and your milk," he says. Worried you'll miss Baby's next feeding? Just pump before sipping.

Iceland: Go Fish!

► **Icelanders eat an average of 225 pounds of fish per year**—a smart move, because it's rich in the omega-3 fatty acids that keep the brain sharp and protect against heart disease, says nutritional neuroscience expert Capt. Joseph R. Hibbeln, M.D., of the National Institutes of Health. Plus, a study in *The Lancet* reports that moms-to-be who ate more than 12 ounces of seafood a week (about two or three servings) had kids with higher IQ scores than those who ate less fish.

TRY IT AT HOME Aim to eat up to 12 ounces of seafood weekly. Pregnant and nursing women should stick to low-mercury fish such as wild salmon, advises Keri Gans, R.D., author of *The Small Change Diet*. Not a fish fan? Make sure your prenatal has at least 200 milligrams of DHA, the omega-3 that's responsible for a baby's brain development. Walnuts are also full of omega-3s that get converted to DHA.

Australia: Spread It On

► **You've probably heard of Vegemite, a favorite food from Down Under.** Australians often spread this salty paste of brewer's yeast on bread and crackers. But what you may not know is that in Aussie-land, it's also touted as a way to ward off birth defects. No wonder: Vegemite is a rich source of B vitamins. In fact, one serving contains a whopping 25 percent of the recommended daily amount of folate (a form of vitamin B that most women fall short on), which helps prevent neural-tube defects.

TRY IT AT HOME At 10 calories per teaspoon, Vegemite makes a light

and healthy topper, Gans says. (Order a jar for about \$15 at Amazon .com.) Warning: It's an acquired taste. Don't like its distinctive flavor? Load up on broccoli, leafy greens, and Brussels sprouts to boost your folate intake. (If you're pregnant, trying to get pregnant, or breastfeeding, you'll still need a daily prenatal vitamin to ensure you hit your folate quota.) Even if you're not planning to get pregnant again, make sure you have plenty of folate-rich foods in your diet; doctors think the nutrient may help lower the risk for certain diseases, including breast and cervical cancer.

VEGEMITE CAN SUPPLY 25 PERCENT

OF YOUR DAILY FOLATE NEEDS



Gambia: Pass the Peanuts

► In this African country, mothers typically use peanuts in their soups and stews instead of meat, explains Sandra Gordon, coauthor of *30 Secrets of the World's Healthiest Cuisines*. Peanuts are a super source of resveratrol, the antioxidant found in wine that's touted for its anti-aging, anti-cancer benefits.

TRY IT AT HOME High-fiber, protein-filled peanuts fight hunger, making them an ideal on-the-go snack for moms and moms-to-be. As long as you don't have a peanut allergy, they're safe to eat while pregnant or breastfeeding, experts say. Aim for about an ounce of them—the amount that fills a shot glass. (But make sure to keep them out of Baby's grasp, as they're a choking hazard.) Nosh peanuts with their skin to score double the antioxidants, Gans suggests.

PEANUTS ARE AN IDEAL

PORTABLE ENERGY POP

Greece: Feed Fertility

► **In the Mediterranean, menu staples include fruit, veggies, olive oil, and fish.** Making these bites your go-to foods is a boon for expecting mamas. Following a Med-style diet while preggo may help reduce your child's risk of developing asthma and allergies, a study in *Thorax* suggests. Want to get pregnant? This mode of eating may boost your baby-making odds. According to research in *Fertility and Sterility*, couples who consume a Mediterranean-style diet are 40 percent more likely to conceive after IVF than couples who don't follow the eating plan. Finally, joining club Med might also tip the scales in your favor, indicates research from the University of Navarra, in Spain. The study authors found that women who stuck close to this meal plan were 20 percent less likely to become overweight over the course of six years than women who didn't.

TRY IT AT HOME The Mediterranean diet tends to be tastier and more

satiating than a low-fat diet, notes Dawn Jackson Blatner, R.D., a nutrition expert and spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association. Whether you're pregnant or trying for another child, or you just want to keep your weight in check, going Greek is a good idea. So start making a few simple Greece-inspired tweaks to your diet today. For example, opt for healthy fats such as olive oil and canola oil instead of cooking with butter; limit red meat to a few meals a month; serve whole-grain rice and pasta as side dishes; and slice up fruits and veggies for quick snacks so you aren't tempted by the vending machine when you get the munchies. Not only can making these upgrades keep your weight steady and better your odds of conceiving, but this diet also offers a nice balance of the nutrient-rich foods that are crucial for your bambino's health (as well as your long-term health).

Spain: Snooze On

► **In Spain, workers nap post-lunch.**

Taking a snooze may help keep your ticker in top shape. Adults who log at least three 30-minute afternoon naps weekly cut their chances of heart attack by more than one third, research from the Harvard School of Public Health suggests. Another reason to snag more winks: A study reveals that dieters who got only 5½ hours of sleep lost less body fat than when they slept for 8½ hours each night.

TRY IT AT HOME "If you have the chance for a siesta, take it," says Dimitrios Trichopoulos, M.D., Ph.D., author of the Harvard study. When your baby goes down for a nap, doze off instead of doing dishes. Or have a friend hold down the fort while you relax. Until your baby is on a better sleep schedule, do what you need to in order to rest, *comprende?* ●