

# The secrets of a very long life essay



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There are several places in the world that are famous for people who live a very long time. These places are usually in mountainous areas, far away from modern cities. Even so, doctors, scientists, and public health specialists often travel to these regions to solve the mystery of a long, healthy life; in this way, the experts hope to bring to the modern world the secrets of longevity. Hunza is at a very high altitude in the Himalayan Mountains of Asia. There, many people over one hundred years of age are still in good physical health.

Additionally, men of ninety are father, and women of fifty still have babies. What are the reasons for this good health? Scientists believe that the people of Hunza have these three main advantages or benefits: (1) a healthful unpolluted environment with clean air and water; (2) a simple diet high in vitamins, fiber, and nutrition but low in fat, cholesterol, sugar, and unnatural chemicals; and (3) physical work and other activities, usually in the fields or with animals. People in the Caucasus Mountains in Russia are also famous for their longevity.

Official birth records were not available, but the community says a woman called Tsurba lived until age 160. Similarly, a man called Shirali probably lived until 168; moreover, his widow was 120 years old. In general, the people not only live along time, but they also live well. In other words, they are almost never sick. Furthermore, when they die, they not only have their own teeth but also a full head of hair, and good eyesight too. Vilcabamba, Ecuador, is another area famous for the longevity of its inhabitants.

This mountain region -like Hunza and the Caucasus -is also at a very high altitude, far away from cities. In Vilcabamba, too, there is very little serious disease. One reason for the good health of the people might be the clean, beautiful environment; another advantage is the moderate climate. The temperature is about 70 degrees Fahrenheit all year long; furthermore, the wind always comes from the same direction. In addition, the water comes from mountain streams and is high in minerals: perhaps as a result of this valuable resource, the region is rich in flowers, fruits, vegetables, and wildlife.

In some ways, the diets of the inhabitants in the three regions are quite different. Hunza's eat mainly raw vegetables, fruit (especially apricots), and chapattis—a kind of pancake; they eat meat only a few times a year. In contrast, the Caucasian diet consists mainly of milk, cheese, vegetables, fruit, and meat; also, most people there drink the local red wine daily. In Vilcabamba, people eat beans, potatoes, and fruit. Most people there, even the very old, consume a lot of coffee and drink large amounts of alcohol.

Inhabitants in the three regions live in the countryside and are mostly farmers; their lives are physically hard and extremely active. Therefore, they do not need to make a special effort to exercise. In addition, the population does not seem to have the stress of fast city work and recreation; as a result, people's lives are relatively free from worry—and therefore, illness or other health problems. Thus, some experts believe that physical movement and a stress-free environment might be the two most important secrets of longevity.