



BLUE ZONES PROJECT

RESTAURANT PLEDGE

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**Optimize your  
restaurant for  
better health and  
business**

[bluezones.com](http://bluezones.com)

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## WHAT IS BLUE ZONES PROJECT?

Across the globe lie blue zones areas, where people reach age 100 at an astonishing rate. Citizens of places like Sardinia, Italy; Okinawa, Japan; and Loma Linda, California, have maintained their healthy lifestyles for generations. Blue Zones Project® aims to adopt the lifestyle principles of these areas to transform cities and towns into Blue Zones Communities®, where people can live longer, better lives.

Our town is trying to become a Blue Zones Community. Achieving that goal requires restaurants, grocery stores, schools, worksites, and city government to make healthy choices easier through permanent changes to environment, policy, and social networks.

Restaurants play a key role in Blue Zones Project as more and more customers are seeking healthy options when eating out. By adopting best practices from around the country, restaurants can meet growing customer demand and increase revenue, all while improving customers' health. Our Blue Zones Project team is here to help you optimize your restaurant environment for better health and business.

## BENEFITS FOR RESTAURANTS

- **Restaurant promotion through Blue Zones Project social media and website that drives new customers to your store**
- **Opportunities to cater community events, which will increase community awareness of your restaurant**
- **Opportunities to cater meetings and events at Blue Zones Project Approved™ worksites, creating new, on-going business**
- **Ability to attract new diners by offering healthier options**
- **Increased sales of healthy food and beverage options through best practices that highlight these items**
- **Access to Blue Zones Project resources, support, and marketing collateral to implement best practices**
- **Recognition for being part of an important community-wide project to improve well-being**

## STEPS TO ACHIEVE BLUE ZONES PROJECT APPROVED STATUS

1. Review the Blue Zones Project® Restaurant Pledge, and identify which best practices you already do and which ones you would like to start doing.
2. Pursue the pledge actions you identified using the document entitled “Detailed Descriptions of Blue Zones Project Restaurant Pledge Actions.” Our team is here with resources, expertise, and collateral to help you complete the pledge actions. Work with your Blue Zones Project team to get access to the online marketing resource center.
3. As you complete pledge actions, document their completion to meet the validation requirements for each pledge action.
4. Measure the impact of the changes made in your restaurant by tracking items such as sales and inventory. Other restaurants have seen increased sales of healthy foods and beverages, increased sourcing from farm to restaurant, and improved customer feedback and loyalty.
5. When you have implemented all of the best practices you selected, contact a Blue Zones Project team member to validate your achievement. Then, celebrate your status as Blue Zones Project Approved.

## BLUE ZONES PROJECT HELPS YOUR BOTTOM LINE

Participating in Blue Zones Project isn't just better for the health of your customers. You'll boost your bottom line at the same time. Here's how!

### Customers Buy Healthier Options

- In a study of sales at chain restaurants between 2006 and 2011, chains that increased their better-for-you/low-calorie servings saw a 5.5 percent increase in same-store sales, while those that did not suffered a 5.5 percent decrease.<sup>1</sup>
- Soda consumption has been declining for nearly a decade. The average American consumed over 50 gallons of soda in 2005. By 2012, they consumed 42.4 gallons.<sup>2</sup> Diners are looking for alternative beverages, making this a great time to add healthier choices like tea or sparkling water to your menu.
- By tweaking your menu you can increase sales of healthy options and increase sales overall. Just adding descriptive menu labels to healthy options (e.g. "rich blend of lentils with notes of cardamom") can boost sales by up to 27 percent.<sup>3</sup>

### Smaller Portions Increase Profit Margins

- Researchers have found that small portions satisfy hunger and cravings just as well as large portions.<sup>4</sup> By charging more than 50 percent of the full-size price, half-size portions are more profitable than full-size portions.
- If servers offer customers the option to downsize unhealthy side dishes, they typically say yes—even without a discount.<sup>5</sup> This cuts down on food costs and increases profit margins.

### Eliminating Giveaways Reduces Food Costs

- Bread costs restaurants an average \$2.50/pound, but it is typically served for free.<sup>6</sup> Save money—and encourage healthier eating—by making the breadbasket available by request only or by charging for bread.

### Early Leftover Reminder to Increase Sales

- A study showed that people who are told about to-go boxes before they order are about 40 percent more likely to say they will take home leftovers than those who are asked afterward—a double win as people might order more and eat less at each sitting, thus having room for a high-margin beverage.<sup>7</sup>

## BLUE ZONES PROJECT RESTAURANT PLEDGE

This pledge includes best practices that will help your customers live longer, better while boosting your revenue through increased demand for healthy menu options. The more best practices you adopt, the more you optimize your restaurant environment for better health and increased business.

### ACHIEVING BLUE ZONES PROJECT APPROVED STATUS

- Adopt best practices to earn at least 44 out of 66 total possible points.

*\*Completion of the best practices will be confirmed by Blue Zones Project team. You will be asked to submit a copy of your menu, pictures, and other documentation.*

### BEST PRACTICES

Section 1: Entrée Offering	Currently Doing	Points	Will Do
1. Offer half-size portions of your top-selling entrées. Promote this choice on your menu.		3	
2. Offer a children’s menu with at least one entrée that meets the Blue Zones Healthy Dish Guidelines (salads excluded). Call attention to these entrées on your menu. You may label them as “Blue Zones® Inspired.” <i>For each additional entrée you offer, you earn two points (up to four bonus points, for a total of six possible points).</i>		2	
3. Offer one entrée that meets the Blue Zones Healthy Dish Guidelines (salads excluded). Call attention to this entrée on your menu. You may label it as “Blue Zones® Inspired.” <i>For each additional entrée you offer, you earn two points (up to six bonus points, for a total of eight possible points).</i>		2	
4. Price entrées with a plant-based protein lower than meat entrées.		2	

Section 2: Side Dishes and Ingredients	Currently Doing	Points	Will Do
5. Offer a vegetable, fruit, 100 percent whole grain, or salad as the default side-dish selection for all applicable menu items.		3	
6. Offer whole grain alternatives to all of your refined-grain options. Promote this option on your menu.		2	
7. Source three fruits and/or vegetables from local farms or farmers markets (produced less than 400 miles away) during the growing season.		2	
8. Do not offer soda, chocolate milk, or fruit juices as default beverages for children’s meal.		2	
9. If you serve dessert, offer at least one option that is only fresh fruit. Call attention to these desserts on your menu. You may label them as “Blue Zones® Inspired.”		2	
10. Offer 100-calorie ‘nice bite’ desserts for at least half of your dessert offerings. Promote this choice on your menu.		2	

<b>Section 3: Education and Awareness</b>	<b>Currently Doing</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Will Do</b>
11. Train staff at least quarterly on the pledge actions you have completed. Post a list of the pledge actions in the staff room.		3	
12. Train servers to only mention vegetables, fruit, salad, and 100 percent whole grains as side-dish options when taking food orders.		2	
13. Let customers know before they order that to-go boxes can be brought at any time during the meal (before, during, or after). Promote this on your menu or table tent.		2	
14. Offer promotions or discounts on “Blue Zones Project® Inspired” entrees, if applicable.		2	
15. Have 25 percent of restaurant staff sign the Blue Zones Personal Pledge.		1	
16. Allow patrons to split plates at no extra charge.		1	

<b>Section 4: Environment</b>	<b>Currently Doing</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Will Do</b>
17. Prohibit smoking on restaurant property both indoors and outdoors.		3	
18. Do not place a salt shaker on the table unless requested. Remove the shaker when busing the table.		3	
19. Do not offer free refills on sugar-sweetened beverages.		3	
20. Install bicycle racks outside of your restaurant.		2	
21. Serve patrons a glass of water upon arrival and/or leave a water pitcher on the table.		1	

<b>Section 5: Preparation and Presentation</b>	<b>Currently Doing</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Will Do</b>
22. Optimize your menu using four of the suggestions from the Blue Zones Optimized Healthy Menu Design (requires menu revision). <i>For each additional included suggestion, you earn one point (up to four bonus points, for a total of eight possible points).</i>		4	
23. Do not serve bread or chips before meals unless requested.		3	
24. Allow customers to request any entrée grilled, baked, or broiled rather than fried. Promote this option on your menu.		2	
25. Offer raw vegetables or a healthy sample (amuse-bouche) before dinner instead of bread.		2	
26. Serve all salad dressings and condiments on the side.		2	
27. Serve sugar-sweetened beverages in glasses that hold 12 ounces or less (preferably tall, narrow glasses).		2	
28. Serve entrées on 10-inch plates or smaller.		2	

29. Offer club soda, sugar-free soda, and/or sugar-free iced tea as alternatives to sugar-sweetened beverages.		1	
30. Use plates, glasses, and bowls that are smaller for children than for adults.		1	
31. If you serve bread, serve it with olive oil instead of butter.		1	
32. Do not butter bread or buns before serving.		1	

**Section 6: Propose New Pledge Actions:** *This section allows you to propose up to three new pledge actions that align with the intent of Blue Zones Project. Please review your validation form for detailed instructions on developing and submitting new pledge actions. Up to three pledge actions can be proposed for a maximum of six total bonus points. Pledge actions will be approved and point value assigned by the Blue Zones Project team.*

33.

34.

35.

**TOTAL YOUR POINTS**

	Points
Currently Doing	
Will Do	
<b>Total Points</b>	

Must be 44 or greater to achieve Blue Zones Project Approved status



## DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF BLUE ZONES PROJECT RESTAURANT PLEDGE ACTIONS

### Section 1: Entrée Offering

#### 1. Offer half-size portions of your top-selling entrées. Promote this choice on your menu.

**How to do it:** Offer half-size entrées while charging a price that enables you to maintain profit margins. In our pilot project in Albert Lea, MN, restaurants charged 70 percent of the price of the full-size option. List the half-size portion option next to the full-size option so customers can easily see it.

**Why do it?** Portion sizes of beverages, packaged food, and restaurant food have increased steadily over the past 30 years and well exceed federal standards for dietary guidance.<sup>8</sup> Research has shown that consumers eat 18–25 percent more food when the portion size is doubled.<sup>9</sup>

**Validation Requirement:** Copy of menu.

#### 2. Offer a children’s menu with at least one entrée that meets the Blue Zones Healthy Dish Guidelines (salads excluded). Call attention to these entrées on your menu. You may label them as “Blue Zones® Inspired.” For each additional entrée you offer, you earn two points (up to four bonus points, for a total of six possible points).

**How to do it:** Create new or modify existing children’s dishes to meet the Blue Zones Healthy Dish Guidelines. Submit a recipe detailing the quantity of ingredients and the cooking method used for each entrée to the Blue Zones Project team, which will verify that they meet the Blue Zones Healthy Dish Guidelines. Once verified, label these entrées on your menu as “Blue Zones® Inspired.”

**Why do it?** Obesity rates in children have tripled in the last 30 years so that nearly one in five children over age five is overweight or obese.<sup>10</sup> A recent analysis of chain restaurants found that 93 percent of children’s meals are high in calories.<sup>11</sup> As Americans are increasingly eating more food away from home, restaurants can play a role in helping parents and children choose healthier meals when dining out.

**Validation Requirement:** Copy of menu and recipes for entrées labeled “Blue Zones Project® Inspired.”

#### 3. Offer one entrée that meets the Blue Zones Healthy Dish Guidelines (salads excluded). Call attention to this entrée on your menu. You may label it as “Blue Zones® Inspired.” For each additional entrée you offer, you earn two points (up to six bonus points, for a total of eight possible points).

**How to do it:** Create new or modify existing main dishes to meet the Blue Zones Healthy Dish Guidelines. Submit a recipe detailing the quantity of ingredients and the cooking method used for each entrée to the Blue Zones Project team, who will verify that they meet the Blue Zones Healthy Dish Guidelines. Once verified, label each entrée on your menu as “Blue Zones® Inspired.”

**Why do it?** The typical American entrée (without an appetizer or dessert) has 1000 calories, and some entrées range up to a shocking 2500 calories!<sup>12</sup> For the average adult, eating one meal away from home each

week translates to roughly two extra pounds each year.<sup>13</sup> With nearly one-half of every food dollar spent on food prepared outside the home, make it easier for your customers to make the healthy choice by offering healthy entrées.<sup>14</sup> Also, research shows that using a symbol to highlight menu items is effective at drawing attention to those items.<sup>15</sup>

**Validation Requirement:** Copy of menu and recipes for entrées labeled “Blue Zones® Inspired.”

**Additional Resources:** For modifying recipes and creating new recipes, please see “Vegetarian Starter Kit for Restaurants,” Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, available on Blue Zones Project website.

#### 4. Price entrées with a plant-based protein lower than meat entrées.

**How to do it:** Make the price of entrées with a plant-based protein lower than that of meat entrées, while maintaining profit margins.

**Why do it?** Research has demonstrated that reducing the price of foods increases their purchase.<sup>16</sup> Studies show that Americans consume more meat than is recommended.<sup>17</sup> By pricing entrées that do not contain meat lower than those that do, you are incentivizing your patrons to consume more plant-based entrées. As plant-based entrées tend to have lower food costs, you can preserve profit margins even with a lower price.

**Validation Requirement:** Copy of menu.

## Section 2: Side Dishes and Ingredients

#### 5. Offer a vegetable, fruit, 100 percent whole grain, or salad as the default side-dish selection for all applicable menu items.

**How to do it:** Limit side dishes to vegetables, fruit, salad, or 100 percent whole grains. Vegetables should not be fried or prepared with heavy sauces, and fruit should be fresh or in natural juice without added sugar. Examples of appropriate side dishes include: fresh fruit, steamed vegetables, salad with dressing on the side, a small serving of sweet potatoes (roughly ½ cup), quinoa, and brown rice.

**Why do it?** Just as the “opt-out versus opt-in” program has increased organ donation and retirement savings, the same concept has shown promise for improving healthy eating.<sup>18</sup> By making the healthy choice the default and requiring customers to opt out of that choice for something less healthy, it reduces barriers to eating healthier foods.

**Validation Requirement:** Copy of menu.

#### 6. Offer whole grain alternatives to all of your refined-grain options. Promote this option on your menu.

**How to do it:** Offer and promote on your menu whole grain alternatives for all of your refined-grain options (e.g. whole grain pasta instead of refined grain pasta, brown rice instead of white rice). For examples of whole grain alternatives, refer to the Blue Zones Foods List.

**Why do it?** Eating whole instead of refined grains substantially lowers total cholesterol, low-density lipoprotein (LDL, or bad) cholesterol, triglycerides, and insulin levels, thus reducing the risk for cardiovascular disease. In the Harvard-based Nurses' Health Study, women who ate two to three servings of whole grain products (mostly bread and breakfast cereals) each day were 30 percent less likely to have a heart attack or die from heart disease over a ten-year period than women who ate less than one serving per week.<sup>19</sup> A meta-analysis of seven major studies showed that cardiovascular disease was 21 percent less likely in people who ate 2.5 or more servings of whole grain foods per day compared with those who ate less than two servings per week.<sup>20</sup>

**Validation Requirement:** Copy of menu

- 7. Source three fruits and/or vegetables from local farms or farmers markets (produced less than 400 miles away) during the growing season.**

**How to do it:** Purchase a portion of your fruits and/or vegetables from local farms or farmers markets. The fruits or vegetables should be produced within 400 miles of your community.

**Why do it?** Purchasing local produce and other seasonal ingredients can ensure freshness and support the local economy. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that communities improve availability of mechanisms for purchasing foods from farms.<sup>21</sup>

**Validation Requirement:** Description of types and portion of fruits and/or vegetables that are sourced from local farms or farmers markets, what local farms or farmers markets the restaurant sources from, and how frequently.

- 8. Do not offer soda, chocolate milk, or fruit juices as default beverages for children's meal.**

**How to do it:** Do not offer sugar-sweetened beverages such as soda, chocolate milk, or fruit juices as a default with your children's meals. There should be an additional cost to deter parents from ordering less-healthy options.

**Why do it?** The CDC Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity (DNPAO) has identified six evidence-based strategies for preventing and reducing overweight and obesity, one of which is "decreasing the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages." This includes soda, chocolate milk, and fruit juices. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that the daily intake of fruit juice be limited to 4–6 ounces for children 1–6 years old. For children 7–18 years old, juice intake should be limited to 8–12 ounces, or two servings, per day.

**Validation Requirement:** Copy of menu.

- 9. If you serve dessert, offer at least one option that is only fresh fruit. Call attention to these desserts on your menu. You may label them as "Blue Zones® Approved."**

**How to do it:** Offer at least one dessert option that is only fresh fruit with no added sugars. Once verified with the Blue Zones Project team, label these desserts on your menu as “Blue Zones® Approved.”

**Why do it?** Offering a fruit-only dessert provides customers with a healthy option to satisfy the sweet tooth while reaping the many health benefits of fruit.

**Validation Requirement:** Copy of menu.

**10. Offer 100-calorie ‘nice bite’ desserts for at least half of your dessert offerings. Promote this choice on your menu.**

**How to do it:** Offer bite-sized desserts that are under 100 calories while charging a price that enables you to maintain profit margins.

**Why do it?** Portion sizes of beverages, packaged food, and restaurant food have increased steadily over the past 30 years and well exceed federal standards for dietary guidance.<sup>8</sup> Research has shown that consumers eat 18–25 percent more food when the portion size is doubled.<sup>9</sup> According to the National Restaurant Association’s “What’s Hot in 2012” survey, bite-size and mini desserts are among the top three trends in the category of desserts.<sup>22</sup> At Rathbun’s, dessert sales rose nearly three-fold since the restaurant went all-mini, and sales of after-dinner coffee, cocktail, and wines increased as well.<sup>23</sup>

**Validation Requirement:** Copy of menu.

### Section 3: Education and Awareness

**11. Train staff at least quarterly on the pledge actions you have completed. Post a list of the pledge actions in the staff room.**

**How to do it:** Train all staff at least quarterly on how to maintain the pledge actions your restaurant has completed to become Blue Zones Project Approved. Post a copy of the list in the staff room.

**Why do it?** Properly training and retraining staff to follow your restaurant’s pledge will ensure that the actions you have taken to improve your business sustain over time. Posting your list of pledge actions in a prominent place where staff can view it will continually remind them to follow the best practices you have adopted.

**Validation Requirement:** Confirmation of action and picture of posted Blue Zones Project best practices in the staff room.

**12. Train servers to only mention vegetables, fruit, salad, and 100 percent whole grains as side-dish options when taking food orders.**

**How to do it:** Train servers to only mention vegetables, fruit, salad, and 100 percent whole grains as side-dish options when taking orders. Acknowledge the option of a less-healthy side dish (e.g. fries, onion rings) only when customers request it.

**Why do it?** By making the healthy choice the default, it reduces barriers to eating healthier because people are automatically offered the healthiest choice. Customers who are first offered healthier sides may be more inclined to order them.

**Validation Requirement:** Confirmation of action.

**13. Let customers know before they order that to-go boxes can be brought at any time during the meal (before, during, or after). Promote this on your menu or table tent.**

**How to do it:** Call out on your menu the ability to get a to-go box at any time during the meal. Train servers to bring a to-go box with the food order when customers request one. You may also display an “Easy-To-Go” table tent that tells customers they can request a to-go box while ordering.

**Why do it?** Reminding customers ahead of time that they can take unfinished food home removes pressure to overeat. If reminded of the availability of to-go boxes up front, some customers may choose to put a portion of their meal in the to-go box before they begin eating. A study showed that people who are told about to-go boxes before they order are about 40 percent more likely to say they will take home leftovers than those who are asked afterward-leaving room for add-ons such as a high-margin beverage or dessert.<sup>7</sup>

**Validation Requirement:** Description of promotion of to-go boxes or picture of table tents.

**14. Offer promotions or discounts on “Blue Zones® Inspired” entrées, if applicable.**

**How to do it:** Once you have an entrée that meets the Blue Zones Healthy Dish Guidelines, provide specials promotions or a discount and market the offering in the store, online, or have your wait staff mention it when taking food orders.

**Why do it?** Calling attention to your “Blue Zones Project® Inspired” entrées will bring more awareness of your involvement in Blue Zones Project, which could lead to more business.

**Validation Requirement:** Confirmation of action.

**15. Have 25 percent of restaurant staff sign the Blue Zones Personal Pledge.**

**How to do it:** Contact your local Blue Zones Project team to have someone walk through the recruitment speech and Personal Pledge with your staff, and ask everyone to sign.

**Why do it?** Signing the Personal Pledge will create awareness and education among your staff. Staff will have a better understanding of what the Blue Zones Project is and will be able to better communicate your involvement with customers.

**Validation Requirement:** Confirmation of action.

**16. Allow patrons to split plates at no extra charge.**

**How to do it:** Allow patrons to split any entrée at no extra cost. Let customers know this by labeling this feature on your menu.<sup>24</sup> See the provided sample menu as an example.

**Why do it?** Over 75 percent of sodium in an American’s diet comes from processed food and food served in restaurants, making restaurants an essential tool for affecting the health of communities.<sup>25</sup> Allowing customers to share a plate at no additional cost reduces the amount of sodium, calories, and fat content they consume. If patrons are allowed to split plates, they are also more likely to order additional items such as appetizers, beverages, and desserts, typically higher-margin items.

**Validation Requirement:** Confirmation of action.

**Section 4: Environment**

**17. Prohibit smoking on restaurant property both indoors and outdoors.**

**How to do it:** Let all employees and customers know that smoking is not permitted anywhere on restaurant property. A clear, consistent message delivered weeks in advance of the start of enforcement allows time for customers to adjust.

**Why do it?** A review of the top studies on the economic impact of smoke-free policies in the hospitality industry demonstrated no impact or a positive impact of smoke-free restaurant and bar laws on sales and employment.<sup>26</sup> Community smoking bans (including in workplaces) are associated with a 17 percent reduction in heart attacks, with the greatest effect seen on younger individuals and nonsmokers.<sup>27</sup>

**Validation Requirement:** Description of policy or picture of signage.

**18. Do not place a salt shaker on the table unless requested. Remove the shaker when bussing the table.**

**How to do it:** Wait for a customer to request salt before placing a salt shaker on their table. Remove the salt shaker when you clear the table.

**Why do it?** The average American consumes over 3400 mg of sodium per day, which is well above the recommended 1500 mg per day for most Americans.<sup>28</sup> Many restaurant meals provide more than a whole day’s worth of sodium.<sup>29</sup> Over 75 percent of dietary sodium comes from packaged and restaurant foods. Consuming too much sodium can lead to high blood pressure, which leads to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke, and kidney disease.<sup>30</sup> Removing salt shakers from tables pushes customers away from automatically salting food just because the salt is there.

**Validation Requirement:** Confirmation of action.

**19. Do not offer free refills on sugar-sweetened beverages.**

**How to do it:** Limit portions of sugar-sweetened beverages to one serving.

**Why do it?** Approximately 50 percent of increased calories in the American diet come from consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages.<sup>31</sup> Limiting access to sugar-sweetened beverages can help improve the health of your customers.

**Validation Requirement:** Confirmation of action.

**20. Install bicycle racks outside of your restaurant.**

**How to do it:** Work with the city to install bicycle racks outside of your restaurant.

**Why do it?** Restaurants that install bicycle racks can attract more customers and increase revenue while promoting active transportation and community well-being. Studies have shown that people who arrive by bicycle to a restaurant spend less per visit but visit more often than people who arrive by automobile, resulting in more revenue per bicycling customer each month.<sup>32</sup>

**Validation Requirement:** Picture of bicycle racks.

**21. Serve patrons a glass of water upon arrival and/or leave a water pitcher on the table.**

**How to do it:** Serve patrons a glass of water upon arrival. If possible, leave the water pitcher on the table.

**Why do it?** Having water within easy reach encourages patrons to drink more water and thus consume fewer calories, as water can quench thirst and create the sensation of being full. Customers drink more water when a water pitcher is left on the table than when it is farther away.<sup>31</sup>

**Validation Requirement:** Confirmation of action.

**Section 5: Preparation and Presentation**

**22. Optimize your menu using four of the suggestions on the Blue Zones Project Optimized Healthy Menu Design (requires menu revision). For each additional included suggestion, you earn one point (up to four bonus points, for a total of eight possible points).**

**How to do it:** Follow the guidelines on how to optimize your menu to increase the sales of healthier food items. Review the Blue Zones Project Optimized Healthy Menu Design to see an example menu. Apply these guidelines to your menu or menu insert. You may optimize your menu insert instead of your menu only if you have created a menu insert listing “Blue Zones® Inspired” entrées.

**Why do it?** There is research supporting every suggestion in the Blue Zones Project Optimized Healthy Menu Design. For example, one research study found that adding descriptive menu labels increased sales by 27 percent.<sup>33</sup> Another study showed that menu items positioned at the beginning or end of the list in their category were up to twice as popular as those placed in the center of the list.<sup>34</sup>

**Validation Requirement:** Copy of menu or menu insert.

**23. Do not serve bread or chips before meals unless requested.**

**How to do it:** Do not serve bread or chips before meals unless requested by the customer.

**Why do it?** Bread costs restaurants an average \$2.50/pound, but it is typically served for free.<sup>6</sup> Save money—and encourage healthier eating—by making the breadbasket available by request only or by charging for bread. Also, waiting for customers to request chips or bread removes from them the temptation to overeat and reduces food waste. Aside from hunger, one of the reasons people eat is simply because food is in front of them.<sup>9</sup>

**Validation Requirement:** Confirmation of action.

**24. Allow customers to request any entrée grilled, baked, or broiled rather than fried. Promote this option on your menu.**

**How to do it:** Make customers aware that they can request any entrée grilled, baked, or broiled rather than fried.

**Why do it?** Frying uses oils and fats, which add to the calorie content of the overall meal.<sup>35</sup> Foods that are grilled, broiled, or baked are a healthier option with fewer calories from fat.

**Validation Requirement:** Copy of menu.

**25. Offer raw vegetables or a healthy sample (amuse-bouche) before dinner instead of bread.**

**How to do it:** Serve raw vegetables or a sample of a healthy appetizer or soup before dinner in the place of bread.

**Why do it?** Raw vegetables contain fewer calories and can be less costly than bread. An amuse-bouche can provide the patron a glimpse into your chef's approach to the art of cuisine—it is “the best way for a great chef to express his or her big ideas in small bites.”<sup>36</sup>

**Validation Requirement:** Confirmation of action

**26. Serve all salad dressings and condiments on the side.**

**How to do it:** For all salads, serve salad dressings in small portions on the side. Do not provide condiments



(e.g. ketchup, hot sauce, honey mustard) on the table. Provide condiments on the side in small portions (two tablespoons or less).

**Why do it?** Salad dressings can quickly turn a healthy salad into an unhealthy meal because most are loaded with fat, sodium, sugar, and calories.<sup>37</sup> Sauce condiments can be high in sodium and can lead to overconsumption of our recommended daily amount of 1500 mg per day.<sup>38</sup> Two tablespoons of ketchup has about 300 mg of sodium.<sup>39</sup> About 90 percent of Americans consume more sodium than they should.<sup>40</sup> Removing large bottles of sauce condiments from the table nudges customers away from adding too much to their food, saving you food costs at the same time.

**Validation Requirement:** Confirmation of action.

**27. Serve sugar-sweetened beverages in glasses that hold 12 ounces or less (preferably tall, narrow glasses).**

**How to do it:** Replace glasses larger than 12 ounces with tall, narrow glasses that hold 12 ounces or less in order to reduce caloric intake and waste. Serve all sugar-sweetened beverages in these glasses.

**Why do it?** The Cornell University Food and Brand Lab found that people who use short, wide, high-volume glasses regularly consume 28 to 77 percent more liquids than those who use tall, narrow, low-volume glasses.<sup>41</sup> Patrons drink less from smaller glasses because they perceive their portion as larger. Save food costs by serving sugar-sweetened beverages in tall, narrow glasses that hold less.

**Validation Requirement:** Picture and confirmation of action.

**28. Serve entrées on 10-inch plates or smaller.**

**How to do it:** Replace serving dishes with 10-inch plates to reduce caloric intake and food waste.

**Why do it?** The Cornell University Food and Brand Lab found that people who eat off of typical 12-inch plates regularly consume 27 percent more at meals than those who eat off of smaller ten-inch plates.<sup>42</sup> Patrons eat less from smaller plates because they perceive their portion as larger.

**Validation Requirement:** Picture and confirmation of action.

**29. Offer club soda, sugar-free soda, and/or sugar-free iced tea as alternatives to sugar-sweetened beverages.**

**How to do it:** Offer club soda, sugar-free soda, and/or sugar-free iced tea as alternatives to sugar-sweetened beverages.

**Why do it?** Research studies have shown a strong relationship between consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and being overweight or obese.<sup>43</sup> Providing diet or unsweetened soda and/or tea affords patrons an alternative option to consume less sugar.

**Validation Requirement:** Copy of menu.

**30. Use plates, glasses, and bowls that are smaller for children than for adults.**

**How to do it:** Provide plates, glasses, and bowls that are smaller in size to serve food and drinks to children.

**Why do it?** Children need fewer calories than adults. Further, you will reduce food waste, which can lead to higher profits.

**Validation Requirement:** Confirmation of action

**31. If you serve bread, serve it with olive oil instead of butter.**

**How to do it:** The most cost-efficient solution is to not serve bread, but if you choose to serve bread, serve it with olive oil for dipping instead of butter.

**Why do it?** A study showed that olive-oil users get tired of olive oil faster than they do butter, so they end up eating fewer pieces of bread. Diners served olive oil ate 264 calories worth of bread compared to 319 calories for those served butter.<sup>44</sup> Serving bread with olive oil will lead to cost savings as customers will consume less bread.

**Validation Requirement:** Confirmation of action

**32. Do not butter bread or buns before serving.**

**How to do it:** Do not butter bread or buns before serving.

**Why do it?** Serving buttered buns or bread increases the fat and calorie content of a meal.<sup>45</sup> By not buttering sandwich buns or bread, you are providing healthier menu options and removing a time-consuming step in food preparation.

**Validation Requirement:** Confirmation of action.



# BLUE ZONES FOOD LIST



Select from the Top 50 Blue Zones foods to create healthy, delicious meals inspired by blue zones centenarians.



## ISLAND OF IKARIA, GREECE

- Greens (all varieties)
- Lemons
- Eggplant
- Potato
- Mediterranean Herbs
- Chickpeas
- Black-Eyed Peas
- Olive Oil
- Honey
- Coffee



## ISLAND OF SARDINIA, ITALY

- Tomatoes
- Artichokes
- Fennel
- Onions
- Almonds
- Barley
- Durum Semolina
- Pecorino Cheese
- Goat's Milk
- Wine



## NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA

- Papaya
- Bananas
- Mango
- Winter Squash
- Summer Squash
- Cabbage
- Yams
- Corn
- Black Beans
- Limes



## ISLAND OF OKINAWA, JAPAN

- Shiitake Mushrooms
- Sweet Potatoes
- Green Onions
- Garlic
- Bitter Melon
- Seaweed
- Tofu
- Brown Rice
- Turmeric
- Green and Black Tea



## LOMA LINDA, CALIFORNIA

- Beans
- Bell Peppers
- Broccoli
- Berries
- Avocado
- Nuts
- Oats
- Whole Grains
- Seitan
- Tempeh



# BLUE ZONES®

## How to Optimize a Menu

### THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF A HEALTHY MENU

Designing a menu that pushes people toward healthy options is easy. Following these 12 steps can simply reposition what you are already selling, while stimulating healthier choices. A sample menu that has been optimized is attached for reference.

1. Box or highlight healthy, high margin foods/menu options.
2. Add descriptive words that are an alternative for “healthy”.

**Fact:** Research shows that foods with more descriptive names are purchased more and rated as more appealing and tastier than foods with less attractive names. Customers who eat food with more descriptive names also have more favorable attitudes toward the restaurant as a whole. Rather than labeling items as “healthy” or “good for you”, entice customers with labels that target geographic areas (e.g., California Pizza), nostalgic events (e.g., Old-World Manicotti), senses (e.g., Sizzling Shrimp Skewers), brands (e.g., Black Angus Burgers) or adjectives like “crisp” or “fresh”.

3. List sides from healthiest to least healthy.
4. Review the **Healthy Dish Guidelines** and put a healthy side on the menu as the default option.
5. Offer a half-size portion priced to preserve the profit margin.  
**Fact:** Research found that customers will often pay up to 70% of the price of a full-size item without decreasing their satisfaction.
6. Make sure items in all four corners of the menu are the healthier option. We suggest that the very bottom offering is a fruit-only dessert (e.g., California Spring Fruit Salad).
7. Instead of a “Healthy” section, call things “**Light and Fresh**” or use similar taste-related phrases.
8. Use colored or bolded words to highlight healthy target items.
9. Do anything that draws attention to the healthy items, such as artwork or pictures.
10. Section off “**House Favorites**” that are healthy.
11. In any section, make sure the healthiest items are listed first.
12. Offer endorsements for healthy options by local celebrities.

# BLUE ZONES PROJECT®: OPTIMIZED HEALTHY MENU DESIGN



## BONNIE'S FARM FRESH RESTAURANT

Welcome to Bonnie's! Our goal is to serve you food that you love and that loves you. We're committed to serving great food that makes you feel full of vitality. Why not? Try some of our favorites and we promise your mouth, stomach and heart will thank you for it.

### APPETIZERS

#### SPRING ROLLS

Delicious, fresh wraps stuffed with *crisp* lettuce, mint, cilantro, carrots, rice noodles, and your choice of shrimp or tofu. 6.50

#### CRISPY GREEN BEANS

Fresh green beans flash-fried in a light, crispy tempura batter and served with a zesty plum sauce. 8.00

#### ROASTED CHICKEN QUESADILLA

Pulled roasted chicken, sautéed mushrooms, black beans, piquant salsa, and pepper jack cheese grilled between crispy tortillas. 8.00

#### FRUIT, NUTS, AND CHEESE PLATE

New York sharp cheddar, creamy brie, fresh grapes, strawberries, figs, and roasted almonds. A wonderful plate to share! 9.00

#### CHICKEN SATAY

Lightly spiced, marinated chicken, slow-roasted on skewers, served with peanut sauce and a cool cucumber vinaigrette. 9.00

#### MOZZARELLA STICKS

Homemade mozzarella sticks topped with Parmesan cheese and served with a tangy marinara sauce. 8.00

### FRESH SALADS & SOUPS

#### SOUP OF THE DAY

A different delicious soup made fresh every day. Cup 3.50 Bowl

#### MULLIGATAWNY SOUP

A distinctively flavorful soup that's also good for the body! Delicately spiced vegetarian Indian lentil soup topped with fresh cilantro. Cup 3.50 Bowl 4.50

#### CHOPPED SALAD

Garden-fresh romaine and radicchio with egg, avocado and oven-roasted tomato, topped with a Dijon vinaigrette. (Chopped applewood smoked bacon optional). 8.50 Side 5.95

#### SHRIMP OR CHICKEN BISTRO SALAD

Choice of shrimp or chicken with crisp greens, mandarin oranges, roasted almonds, scallions, fresh

grapes, and a tangy vinaigrette. 8.50 Side 5.95

#### BONNIE'S SOUTHWEST SALAD

Fresh, bright flavors are primary in our Southwestern lentil and bean salad, made with fresh chopped vegetables and a spicy avocado salsa dressing. Try one of our favorites! 8.50

#### CHICKEN CAESAR SALAD

Grilled marinated chicken served over crispy romaine, with garlicky croutons, Parmesan cheese, and a flavorful Gorgonzola dressing. 8.50 Side 5.95

#### TACO SALAD

Crispy tortilla shell loaded with lettuce, tomatoes,

### BONNIE'S BURGERS

Our juicy, grilled burgers are served with lettuce, tomato and onion, with a choice of fruit salad, small green salad, garden rice, coleslaw, vegetable of the day, or fries.

#### CLASSIC GRILL BURGER

Our classic burger IS classic! A ¼ pound of ground sirloin lightly seasoned and fire-grilled on our bakery fresh sourdough bun. Add American, Swiss, cheddar, or provolone. 8.50

#### MUSHROOM SWISS BURGER

¼ pound ground sirloin lightly seasoned and fire-grilled, topped with Swiss cheese and sautéed mushrooms. 9.50

#### BBQ BURGER

¼ pound ground sirloin lightly seasoned and fire-grilled, topped with BBQ sauce, bacon, cheddar cheese, and our homemade fried onion strings. 9.50

#### VEGGIE BURGER

Our very special veggie burger, made in our own kitchens! Topped with grilled onions, fresh mushrooms, lettuce, tomato, and crunchy sprouts served on a bakery fresh sourdough bun. Baby Swiss cheese is optional. 7.50

### SANDWICHES & WRAPS

Our freshly made sandwiches and wraps are served with a choice of fruit salad, small green salad, garden rice, coleslaw, vegetable of the day, or fries.

#### BONNIE'S WILD MUSHROOM SANDWICH

One of Bonnie's absolute faves! Fresh, wild mushrooms sautéed with olive oil and garlic on a crusty baguette with fresh mixed greens, melted baby Swiss, and a light Dijon vinaigrette. You'll love it! 9.00

#### REUBEN OR RACHEL

Roasted corned beef or turkey, sliced thin, and topped with Thousand Island dressing, sauerkraut, and Swiss cheese. Served on rye, like the original! 9.00

#### FRESH VEGGIE WRAP

Our veggie wrap is a delightful, refreshing choice! Packed with tahini hummus, crisp fresh lettuce, cool cucumber slices, avocado, tomato, shaved carrots, slivered red peppers, and crunchy sprouts, wrapped in a delicious spinach tortilla. 8.00

#### SPICY CHICKEN WRAP

Fire-grilled chicken, fresh lettuce, tomatoes, and shredded cheese wrapped in a tasty jalapeño tortilla with a chipotle mayo sauce. 8.00

### PASTAS

#### BONNIE'S LEMON GARLIC LINGUINE

A fresh, light entree of lemony linguine combined with chopped garlic, spinach, sun-dried tomatoes, toasted pine nuts, and sprinkled with Parmesan cheese. Crispy prosciutto optional. 14.50 Trim portion 10.50

#### SPRING PASTA

Curly cavatelli noodles are delightful in this pasta of the season! Mixed with white beans, peas, and fresh, spring vegetables in a light herbed olive oil sauce. 14.50 Trim portion 10.50

#### SOBA NOODLES WITH ASPARAGUS AND PEPPERS

Buckwheat Soba noodles and crisp-sautéed vegetables combine with a tasty, sweet-hot sauce to bring together delightful, fresh flavors. Add chopped peanuts for a special treat! 12.50 Trim portion 8.75

#### CHICKEN PARMESAN PASTA

Fettuccini noodles and lightly breaded chicken breast covered with provolone cheese and zesty marinara sauce. 12.50 Trim portion 8.75

### BONNIE'S FAVORITES

#### BONNIE'S SOUTHWEST SALAD

Fresh, bright flavors are primary in our Southwestern lentil and bean salad, made with fresh chopped vegetables and a spicy avocado salsa dressing. Try one of our favorites! 8.50

#### BONNIE'S WILD MUSHROOM SANDWICH

One of Bonnie's absolute faves! Fresh, wild mushrooms sautéed with olive oil and garlic on a crusty baguette with fresh mixed greens, melted baby Swiss, and a light Dijon vinaigrette. You'll love it! 9.00

#### SOBA NOODLES WITH ASPARAGUS & PEPPERS

Buckwheat Soba noodles and crisp-sautéed vegetables combine with a tasty, sweet-hot sauce to bring together delightful, fresh flavors. Add chopped peanuts for a special treat! 12.50 Trim portion 8.75

#### BONNIE'S CAJUN VEGETABLE GUMBO

Try this smoky Cajun gumbo with roasted peppers, tomatoes, parsnips, red beans, black-eyed peas, and okra, with smoked paprika and Cajun spices. Served over brown rice. One of our favorites! 12.50 Trim portion 8.75

### ENTREES

Our entrees are served with a fresh mixed green salad, garlic toast or dinner roll, and a seasonal vegetable of the day or fresh fruit. (Baked potato, garlic mashed potatoes, or fries may be substituted.)

#### FRESH FISH TACOS WITH LIME

A refreshing change! Grilled, fresh tilapia with cilantro, cumin, and crunchy cabbage slaw in delicious corn tortillas. Served with a cilantro, lime yogurt sauce. A delightful choice! 12.50 Trim portion 8.75

#### CHICKEN PICCATA

A delightful chicken dish! Thinly pounded chicken breast, sautéed in white wine, garlic and mushrooms with a lemon-caper sauce. 14.00 Trim portion 9.50

#### NEW YORK STRIP

A delicious cut of steak! An 8-ounce cut, lightly

seasoned and flame-grilled to order. 16.00 Trim portion 11.00

The following tips are designed to nudge customers toward healthy choices. To learn more from Dr. Brian Wansink see: [mindlesseating.org](http://mindlesseating.org).

1 Use colored or bolded words to highlight healthy target foods.

2 Instead of a "Healthy" section, call things "Light and Fresh" or similar taste-related phrases.

3 Use a logo or icon to draw attention to targeted items – beware of using "Healthy" logos, which can sign bad taste.

4 Descriptive words for healthy items sell 28% more.

5 Section off House Favorites that are healthy. In any section such as this, make sure the healthiest items are listed first.

6 For select items, offer ½ size portions for 50%–70% of the full-portion price. Don't call them half size; use 'trim', 'moderate', 'light', etc.

7 Place high-margin healthy items in bold boxes or colored boxes to "call them out."

8 Offer salads, vegetables, and fruit as the default side dish. French Fries can be substituted.

9 Place healthy items in the four corners of the menu and at the beginning of sections.

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