

# The LeafSide Insider

To Your Health & Wowness! 🍌

November  
2025



## LEAFSIDER SPOTLIGHT

## PLANT-POWERED 🌍 ~~GLOBETROTTING~~ *Running*

Sunrise on the Torrey Pines trails, **Karen “Cheetah” G.** is easy to spot — the steady cadence of a lifelong runner who’s still getting faster. Now 67 and retired from service as a Deputy Attorney General, she spends her days running the Del Mar beaches and Torrey Pines trails 🌲, guiding public walks and volunteering as a docent at Torrey Pines State Reserve, and unrolling a yoga mat wherever there’s space. 🧘

Five years ago she went vegan to **boost performance, recovery, and longevity.** She also studies the science behind plant-based diets, and is a fan of Dr. Greger and his book *How Not to Die.* ❤️

The results speak in race bibs: 79 marathons, 92 half marathons, 24 consecutive San Diego Rock ‘n’ Roll Marathons, 11 Boston Marathons, and all 7 World Marathon Majors, including the Age World Championships in Sydney. 🏃

LeafSide helps power the volume. She eats the meals regularly — especially while traveling to races — often shipping boxes ahead for family reunions and vacations. Her sons are fans, too!

“Before LeafSide, I spent so much time preparing meals — now my prep time is minimal, which leaves me more time for training, enjoying nature, and being with my family.” 😊

Favorites include Broccoli Cashew Alfredo, Thai Veggie Noodles with extra veggies and garnishes for flair, and making burritos 🌯 with the Tex-Mex. For recovery, Kale Krush and Mint Chip smoothies are post-run treats.

And when she isn’t running or hiking, you might find “Cheetah” at the piano, guitar, flute, or ringing handbells 🎵 — proof her pace extends well beyond the course.

Thank you Karen for inspiring us to live life fully! 🍌

**“I am in better shape in my late 60s than I was in my 20s and 30s.” The difference? Daily yoga and strength training, smart stretching, and plants at the center of the plate.** 🌱

## Plants. Power. Possibility.

Welcome to the **LeafSide Insider!** It’s your monthly dose of health & wowness, with stories & science for your **best self.** We’re all about **helping you live healthier, be stronger, and thrive longer.**

- Nutrition made easy 🍏
- Fitness & movement tips 💪
- Sleep & mindfulness 🛌
- Connection & purpose 🤝
- Inspiring stories ❤️

## LEAFSIDER WINS!

**“After just two weeks** of both of us eating **LeafSide,** we feel like a million bucks!... LeafSide has been, literally, a life saver for both of us. **We feel so grateful to have this!**”  
– Lynn T.

**“LeafSide** has completely transformed our lives, making busy week nights or travel days a breeze! We are in the best shape of our lives at 60 with **optimal BP, cholesterol, and weight,** and LeafSide is a huge part of making our **'healthspan' equal our lifespan.** Thank you, thank you, thank you!”  
– Kristina B.

**“LeafSide meals have been a godsend.** I’ve been struggling with anemia (B vitamins) for about a year. These are the first meals that have begun **restoring my energy levels.**”  
– Milagros E.

## YOUR HEALTH IS YOURS

Today, the U.S. spends over 18% of GDP on healthcare, yet ranks dead last in health outcomes (especially life expectancy) among developed countries. Chronic illnesses like heart disease and diabetes now consume 80-90% of all healthcare costs. 😞

**How/why?** As studies of twins prove, lifestyle (not genes) is roughly 80% of health risks. Then, **follow the money/incentives:** Big agriculture profits from subsidized crops (e.g. sugar) for big food to hack your bliss points (see below) with cheap artificial junk; big health systems profit from procedures over prevention; and big pharma 💊 makes billions managing chronic disease symptoms, not cures.

**Nobody profits when you & yours are healthy — except you.**

Enter lifestyle medicine (LM) at the turn of the century: From pioneers like Dr. Dean Ornish (heart disease reversal), Prof. T. Colin Campbell (*The China Study*), and Dr. Michael Greger (NutritionFacts.org), the American College of Lifestyle Medicine (ACLM) was founded to rally clinicians 🏥 to **prevent & reverse chronic illness** — not just medicate it — using evidence-based whole food plant-based (WFPB) nutrition, exercise, sleep, stress management, and connectedness.

LeafSide was founded to make the healthiest eating known to science both easy and enjoyable. We also share other safe, effective, and efficient ways to use the best of LM & health research, every day. So keep reading, and advance your own healing and thriving! 🌱

### What's a Bliss Point?

The bliss point is the term used by the processed food industry to describe the combination of **sugar, salt, fat, and texture** to make their “foods” addictive.



**Refined sugar** triggers immediate pleasure response and energy spike



**High salt** enhances flavor and creates thirst for more



**Processed fat** provides cheap texture and false flavors

### BLUE ZONE SECRETS

**What do the world's longest-lived populations have in common?** To start, they all follow predominantly plant-based dietary patterns. From Okinawa to Sardinia, these “Blue Zones” share the longevity secrets hiding in plain sight.



#### Okinawa, Japan

**Sweet potatoes, rice, soy, vegetables** make up the majority of traditional Okinawan diets. They also practice *hara hachi bu*, which means they stop eating when they feel 80% full.



#### Sardinia, Italy

**Beans, whole grains, and vegetables** dominate this centenarian community, with meat being reserved for special occasions. Add in the tradition of multigenerational households and strong social ties, and you see how healthy lifestyle — plus community — powers extraordinary lifespans.



#### Nicoya, Costa Rica

**Rice, beans, and tropical fruits** create one of the healthiest populations on Earth. Nicoyans spend only 15% of what Americans do on healthcare and are more than twice as likely than Americans to live to 90 years old.

## HOW TO OUTSMART 95% OF NUTRITION “INFLUENCERS”

Tired of nutrition noise? Click-bait headlines push fads, miracle cures, and one-off studies — while the U.S. drowns in chronic illness. What most “health influencers” miss is the **totality of evidence:** Decades of peer-reviewed research showing clear dietary patterns that prevent and reverse disease, especially **whole food plant-based** (WFPB) eating.

### The 5 Pillars of Longevity ✓

The good news? You don't need a PhD to eat and live well. With the **5 Pillars of Longevity** framework by world-renowned scientist Dr. Valter Longo (*The Longevity Diet*), you can quickly **spot what really works, and where new claims fit.** We also offer a focusing question from each pillar — to ask yourself, your AI, your clinician, an influencer, etc.:

**1. Basic Research:** How (often) does this work biochemically in cells, organs, or animals/humans? 🧪 e.g. Our always-on metabolism creates oxidants and waste, so we need antioxidants and detox molecules to stay healthy — and plant sources dominate in delivering such.

## PRACTICAL THEORY, FOR YOUR HEALTH & WOWNESS

**2. Epidemiology:** What patterns do we (consistently) see across big populations, over decades? From the EPIC and Adventist studies to Nurses' Health, plant-based diets repeatedly link to healthier BMI, less chronic illness, and longer life. Some influencers claim epidemiology is just correlation, but that's obsolete and uninformed; ask your AI about "causal inference." 🤖

**3. Randomized Clinical Trials:** Did controlled intervention(s) yield desired health outcomes, directly showing cause & effect? e.g. Dr. Dean Ornish demonstrated that WFPB can reverse early Alzheimer's in 5 months. 🧠 The TwiNS Study (Netflix: *You Are What You Eat*) showed lower belly fat, healthier microbiomes, and slower DNA aging after just 8 weeks of vegan meals.

**4. Centenarian Studies:** What do the longest-lived people actually eat? 🌍 Blue Zone populations eat 90–100% whole plants.

**5. Complex Systems:** Does the diet align with body systems and our evolutionary history? Use a holistic view beyond single nutrients, e.g. from "sugar is bad," to understanding how complex carbs in whole foods (fiber and phytonutrients intact) is ideal fuel for our bodies and gut health.

All 5 pillars share the conclusion: **WFPB eating wins!** That's why 100+ countries promote plant-centric dietary guidelines, and the American College of Lifestyle Medicine places WFPB at its core.

### MAXIMIZE THESE 2 NUMBERS ✅

Focus on these **2 powerful numbers** to transform your health with whole food plant-based (WFPB) nutrition.

# >80%

#### Phytonutrient Index

Dr. Greger's favorite indicator of diet quality: Aim to eat over 80% of your calories from whole plants.

# 30+

#### Plant Points Weekly

Top advice of American Gut Project: Eat 30+ different plants per week, including fruits, veggies, whole grains, beans, nuts, seeds, herbs, & spices.

### The 4 Nutrient Groups ✅

Maximize PI & Plant Points, and cover all **4 nutrient groups**:

- 1. Macronutrients:** Complex carbs, healthy fats, clean protein.
- 2. Micronutrients:** Full spectrum of vitamins & minerals.
- 3. Phytonutrients:** Thousands of protective plant compounds.
- 4. Soluble Fiber:** Fuel for your microbiome to make essentials for you like short-chain fatty acids and 90% of your serotonin.

### In a Nutshell: The 5, 2, 4 ✅

See the **5 pillars**. Focus on **2 powerful numbers**. Win on all **4 nutrients**. Thrive and repeat!

No perfection needed, just consistent direction. And now, you've got a compass. 🧭🌱

### HEY W-F-P-B! WHATCHA' DOIN' FOR ME?

Check out these bite-sized, evidence-powered wins from whole food plant-based eating — and don't keep them to yourself. Share the science and the deliciousness with friends & family to help their thriving:

❤️ **Reversal of heart disease, clogged arteries**  
(Ornish 1998, Esselstyn 2014)

🧠 **Reversal of early-stage Alzheimer's disease in 5 months**  
(Ornish 2024)

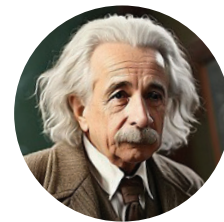
⚖️ **Highest sustained (6 and 12 months) weight-loss without portion-control nor exercise**  
(2017 BROAD study)

📌 **Reversal and remission of type 2 diabetes**  
(Many studies, see ACLM 2025 Clinical Practice Guidelines)

😊 **Reversal of lupus and autoimmune diseases**  
(Goldner 2019)

💙 **The common dietary pattern of all Blue Zones is 90-100% WFPB**

🧬 **Anti-aging: Increase of DNA telomeres in 8 weeks**  
(Gardner TwiNS study 2024)



"Nothing will benefit human health and increase the chances for survival of life on Earth as much as the evolution to a vegetarian diet."

– Albert Einstein

Scan the code to read the expanded version of "5, 2, 4" and more!



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## THEORY INTO PRACTICE: EASY, EFFICIENT, & EFFECTIVE HEALTH HABITS



### INTERVAL WALKING TRAINING: SMALL BURSTS, BIG RESULTS

Want a science-backed, gym-free way to boost fitness? Interval Walking Training (IWT), or “Japanese Walking,” alternates brisk and recovery walking.\* Just minutes a day can transform your health — stronger legs 🦵, fitter lungs 🫁, and healthier BP ❤️:

- **How it works:** 3 minutes brisk pace followed by 3 minutes easy pace; repeat 3–5 times. Use an app on your phone to make it easy – we recommend **Interval Timer**, available for free on app stores.
- **Proven results:** In a 5-month Japanese study, IWT improved aerobic fitness by 14%, leg strength by 17%, and lowered blood pressure vs. steady walkers.
- **Beginner-friendly:** Adapt anywhere — no gym required, just shoes and willingness to speed up.

\*Please consult with a healthcare professional before starting any new fitness program.



### WHAT IS THE PHYTONUTRIENT INDEX?

The Phytonutrient Index (PI) is a formula for how plant-strong your diet is:

$$PI = \frac{\text{Calories from phytonutrient-rich plant foods}}{\text{Total daily calories}} \times 100$$

Foods that count toward your PI are whole plants: fruits, veggies, legumes, beans, whole grains, herbs, nuts, & seeds. A **PI of 80%+ supports better health**, yet the **U.S. average is only 12%**.

For example, start your day with a **Green Grail** smoothie: 513 calories of phytonutrient-packed fruits, greens, and seeds. For lunch, a hearty **Broccoli Cashew Alfredo** bowl at 661 calories. Together, that's 1,174 plant-powered calories. Out of a 1,400-calorie daily goal, your **PI hits an excellent 84%**.



$$\frac{1,174 \text{ calories}}{1,400 \text{ calories}} \times 100 = 84\%$$



*Healthy!*

### LEAFSIDE MAKES IT EASY! ✓

We get it. Counting Plant Points and researching which foods have which phytonutrients can feel overwhelming. That's why LeafSide was created – to make healthy eating effortless.

Each of our bowls, soups, and smoothies deliver 15-30 Plant Points, and **we even print the Plant Points right on the package**. No complicated math, no guessing, and no stress about whether you're fueling your body correctly. And here's the best part: If you simply **enjoy different LeafSide meals daily, you'll more than cover your weekly Plant Point goal**.



22 Plant Points in our Broccoli Cashew Alfredo Savory-Bowl!

## 5 QUICK TIPS TO BOOST YOUR PI AND PLANT POINTS

#### 1 ADD BEANS DAILY

Every serving brings fiber, protein, and gut-friendly prebiotics. **Beans are a staple of every Blue Zone** ❤️ diet! Start with hummus or peas for easy digestion.

#### 2 EAT THE RAINBOW

Each color 🌈 brings different protective phytonutrients, that's why our eyes are drawn to vibrant foods.

#### 3 SWAP IN WHOLE FOODS OVER REFINED

Quinoa is better than white rice, fruit 🍌 is better than juice, whole grains are better than white flour products, etc.

#### 4 SNACK SMARTER

Choose nuts 🥜, seeds, or (dried) fruit, instead of over-salted/sugared/high-fat chips, candy, or bars.

#### 5 START GREEN

Leafy greens 🌿 (kale, collards) have the most nutrients/calorie; toss them into your smoothies for an instant PI lift.

### GET MORE NUTRITION NERDINESS! 🧐

Scan the QR code to learn more about the articles, topics and sources discussed in this month's LeafSide Insider newsletter.



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