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Photo by Farrell Grehan/Corbis

BACK TO A HEALTHY FUTURE WITH THE AMISH

Most Americans lived on farms until the post-Civil War industrial boom led people to chase opportunity into the cities. But as the modern world became more hectic, some urbanites fled to the country for the simpler lives that their great-grandfathers had known.

Some people, like the Amish, never left the simple life behind. Many people see the old-fashioned clothes and horse-drawn buggies as charming relics. But the Amish—who value manual labor, close-knit communities and deep faith—may provide clues to a healthier lifestyle for the stressed-out, disease-prone society that surrounds them.

“Our lifestyle is more geared towards being there for the community and being there to help each other,” says Johnny Miller, 43, owner of OakBridge Timber Framing in Howard, Ohio. OakBridge, which builds traditionally raised and joined frame homes, embodies that ideal: Miller’s father, son, daughter, two brothers and first cousin all work there. “Being in an enjoyable, positive work environment is a key to staying healthy,” he says.

Lack of worry, including worry about health itself, is another aspect of Amish life. Take their famously rich diet, for example. “We do think about what we should eat, healthwise,” says Miller. “But if I’m fretting about eating the piece of terrific pie my wife made, that in my opinion is worse for my health than actually eating the pie.” It helps that the pie isn’t full of preservatives, that the produce and chickens are home-grown—and that all the work involves muscular effort. Those differences are reflected in studies that have found the Amish suffer from lower rates of obesity and cancer, two scourges of American society at large.

Like everyone the Amish have issues to resolve, including how to engage with the outside world; OakBridge now has a website run by non-Amish friends. “It’s a challenge to keep our lifestyle, which we think of as a great heritage, and still be able to function,” says Miller. And it is that lifestyle which may be the Amish’s most valuable gift to the rest of us.

MEDIA

Make Your Fruit Super

Loading your plate with produce is always a good idea, but some plant foods are better for you than others. Case in point: the superfruits. A diverse group that includes such popular exotics as açai and goji, their deep hues signal a wealth of nutrients paired with bright flavors.

In *Superfruits* (McGraw-Hill), berry expert Paul Gross profiles 20 of these nutritional all-stars, including research supporting their benefits and how to incorporate them into your diet. To place this information in context, Gross discusses the specific nutrients found in these fruits as well as the science that explains the health-promoting power behind all those pretty colors. The book closes with 75 recipes that showcase superfruits in desserts, smoothies and salads.

Eating healthier means getting the most nutrition out of every meal. *Superfruits* can help make that job a little easier.

