



Hunza

The people of Hunza, called Hunzakuts, are famous for robust health, longevity, valor, and self-reliance. Lifespan often exceeds 100.

Some attribute this health to "a simple diet of fresh food, no coffee or tea, no sugar, plenty of fruit, lots of minerals in the drinking water, and delicate meat in the winter only, from goats fed of the finest grass and

herbs...they worked hard in the summer and climbed in the mountains for exercise and danced in the winter...there was little mental stress. We could trust our neighbors to help in a disaster...With such vigor and peace of mind combined, it is no wonder an average person lived to be 90 or 100." (Aramco World Magazine, Jan.-Feb. 1983)

Traditionally...

Apricots have been an important crop. They are eaten fresh in the summer and dried in winter.

The apricot kernel is crushed to produce cooking and lamp oil. The kernel is also eaten like an almond nut or ground to make flour.

Every family has at least one plot of land to carefully cultivate with crops such as barley or corn. Rarely has there been a surplus to sell or trade.

Typical Hunza products include "dried apricots, fresh mulberries, apples, cherries, peaches, and a variety of garden produce." (Aramco World Magazine, January-February 1983)

Hunzakut Deedar Aly reported that by the end of winter, having finished the winter supply of food, his family "once had only dandelion leaves, turnip tops, and other weeds to eat." (Aramco World Magazine, March 1994)

Potatoes, barley, unleavened bread, tea, and apricots are common meal items. A typical dinner might also include lentils eaten with thin round chapatis, roast chicken, and a spiced vegetable broth.

History:

China has been a trading partner for centuries.

The "Hunza Road" is a branch of the 2,000-year-old ancient Silk Road that linked China to Rome, the Mediterranean, Africa and India.





Hunza was ruled by the Mirs, a single family of rulers who claimed to have reigned without interruption for more than 900 years. In 1974, the Mir stepped down, and Hunza came under the direct control of Pakistan.

Islam came to Hunza via the trade routes. By the 1800's, most of Hunza had converted.

In 1978, the Karakoram Highway, or KKH, was completed. Now supplies can be obtained year-round.

The biggest event in the Hunza valley is an annual spring planting festival. During this time, a town leader sows a handful of gold dust to symbolize the riches expected to come forth.

Some locals attribute decline in health with eating canned food from Karachi, available following completion of the Karakorum Highway.