

# FOOD

## NO EXTRA KILOS

### How to avoid gaining weight on vacation

Are extra kilos an inevitable consequence of a fun-filled vacation? They don't have to be, according to Harley Posternak, an exercise physiologist, nutritionist and personal trainer in Los Angeles. "Gaining weight on vacation is common, but it's possible to enjoy yourself and not come home heavier," he said. Here, he shares his tips on how to do just that.

#### Stay active

You don't have to bother with a gym on your getaway but it is important to stay active. "In fact, you should be moving much more when you're on vacation than at home because you aren't bound to your desk," he said. On urban getaways, walking to see the sights instead of using public transportation and taxis counts as activity. On beach trips surfing, snorkelling and hiking are great ways to stay fit.

#### Indulge wisely

A vacation isn't a pass to eat high-calorie foods all day, every day and may even be an opportunity to make healthier choices. "People tend to mindlessly eat when they're working because they are so time-pressed, but on vacation, when you're rejuvenating yourself, you have the chance to choose your meals with more thought and really savour them," Posternak said. That said, sampling local specialties is a pleasurable part of any trip, so feel free to indulge in them but in moderation.

#### Go easy on the alcohol

If you have even two drinks a day, a weeklong trip adds up to 14 drinks and thousands of extra calories. If you want to imbibe, Posternak said, count the drinks as your one daily indulgence, and choose lower calorie drinks.

#### Unplug from technology

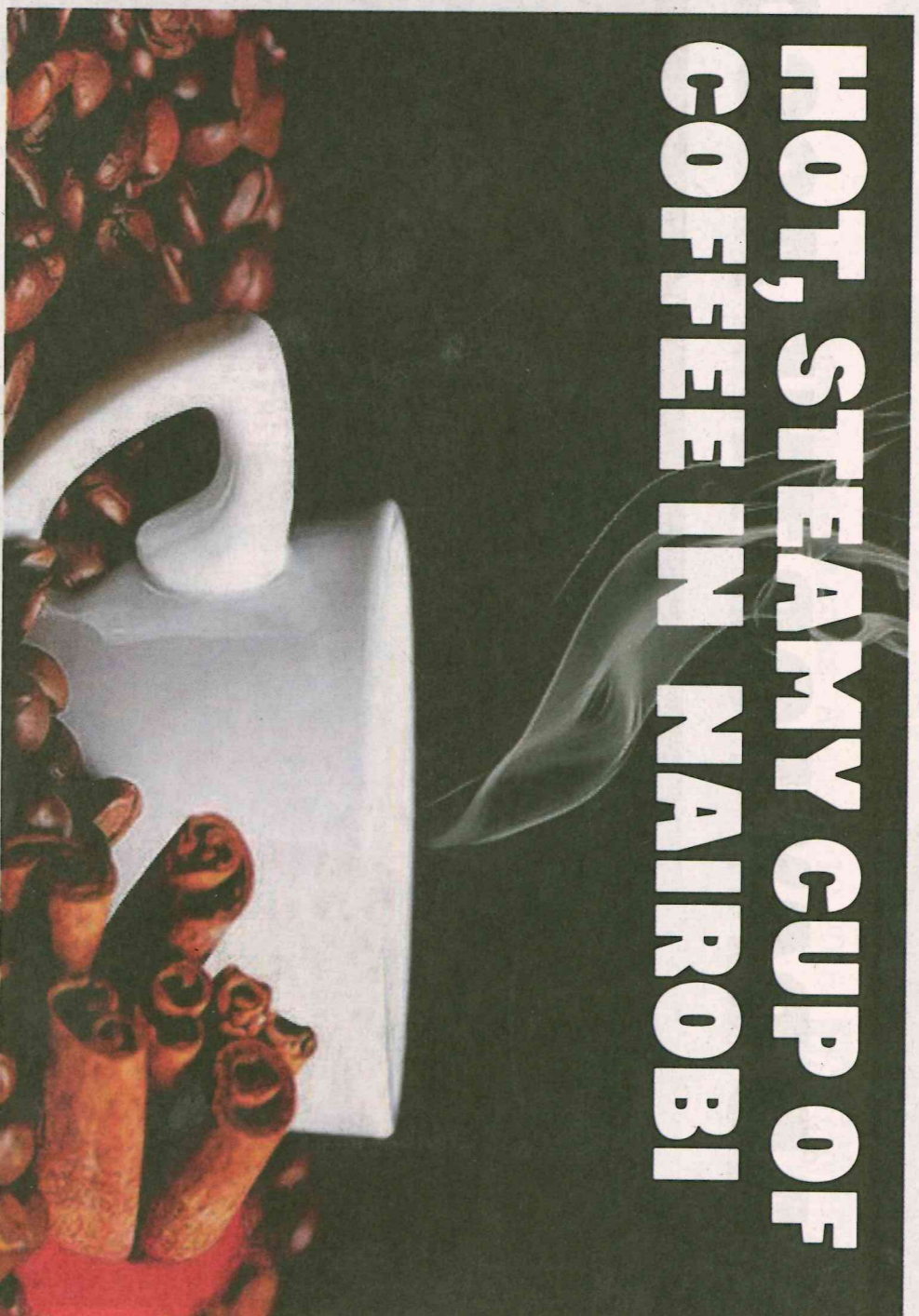
Minimising the time you spend on your cellphone, tablet and computer will help prevent weight gain, Posternak said. "The artificial light from these devices triggers stress, which increases the hormone cortisol, which, in turn, causes us to gain weight," he said. He suggested reading lighthearted books and magazines; they'll help you decompress and lower your stress levels.



—New York Times

**CAFE AT THE GALLERY:** Point Zero, an al fresco coffee shop is situated on the grounds of the historic Nairobi Gallery, built in 1913 and now a national monument and museum

## HOT, STEAMY CUP OF COFFEE IN NAIROBI



Kari Mutu, Special Correspondent

**P**oint Zero Café is revitalising the coffee scene in downtown Nairobi with its brand of specially sourced gourmet Kenyan coffee.

Less than a year old, the shop was set up by Wangeci Gitobu and Andrea Moraa, who discovered that tea-drinking Kenyans are developing a taste for quality coffee.

"People want a really good cup of coffee, so we make French-press coffee," said Wangeci.

Point Zero brews coffee from selected, non-blended beans sourced from local estates. "We have a roaster who has allowed us to label our own coffee," said Andrea. "They roast small batches, which is great for us because then you'll be sure you're getting it fresh."

Kenyan coffee beans are used frequently by multinationals to raise the quality of coffee blended from different regions of the world. Specialty coffee buyers, however, want to know the precise origins of the beans.

Point Zero profiles coffee from Kiambu and Kisii counties, and the Mt Elgon region.

"Our Kiambu coffee offers a pleasant, medium-bodied fruity, flavour with dark fruit elements," said Andrea. "In contrast, the Mt Elgon and Kisii coffees, where the Blue Mountain variety grows, offer a medium body with citrus notes, well-balanced acidity and a clean finish. This coffee goes particularly

well with our zesty lemon cake."

This al fresco coffee shop is situated on the grounds of the historic Nairobi Gallery, built in 1913 and now a national monument and museum. It sits on a wooden platform under a canvas tent open on three sides. Garden chairs with vibrant khanganga fabrics, colourful coffee mugs and potted plants create a cheerful atmosphere beside the aged stone walls of the gallery.

Inside the gallery's small atrium is a plinth holding a glossy black ceramic vessel standing on a tiled floor. The plinth marks Point Zero, the spot from where all distances from Nairobi to any part of the country are measured, hence the name of the café.

The proprietors of Point Zero have been friends since their school days. Andrea is a coffee connoisseur who previously worked as a coffee marketer in Europe and the US. Wangeci is a lawyer by training, and had a long career in the financial services sector until she decided to leave employment to pursue her dream of establishing a business.

A few years ago, they started exploring the idea of setting up a coffee enterprise to share their passion and create a taste for specialty local beans. "We can only get there if more Kenyans start drinking coffee and appreciating it," Andrea said.

Looking around the café, I see local visitors to the gallery, a group of tourists and one or two business people on their laptops. In terms of their customers' favourites, Wangeci

said, "The brewed coffee of the days is very popular, probably because it is always freshly brewed. Our caramel macchiato is a growing favourite of regulars who have a bit of a sweet tooth."

They also sell lots of cappuccinos using the traditional recipe, with the correct ratio of steamed milk to foam. Their coffee beans are available for purchase, with delivery arranged for customers in the downtown area.

For the non-coffee drinkers, Point Zero serves tea, hot chocolate, iced teas, soft drinks and fresh juices, along with breakfast pastries, home-baked cakes and paninis (grilled sandwiches). I had a cappuccino with a slice of poppy-seed cake, which was moist and fresh.

The café is also differentiating itself through entertainment. "In our vision, we would like to be a platform for the arts. We welcome musicians, poets and writers to come and showcase their talents in front of an intimate audience over a cup of coffee," said Wangeci.

To date they have hosted upcoming and off-the-beaten-track artists like percussionist and singer Papillon, keyboardist Francis Mjoroge and his Out of the Box Band, and most recently the Kenyan Boys Choir.

The café is also the starting point for a Nairobi half-day tour. A cup of coffee or tea and pastries precedes a tour of the gallery, followed by a 90-minute walk through the city that ends at the rooftop helipad of the Kenyatta International Convention Centre.

Point Zero sells lots of cappuccinos using the traditional recipe.

Picture: File