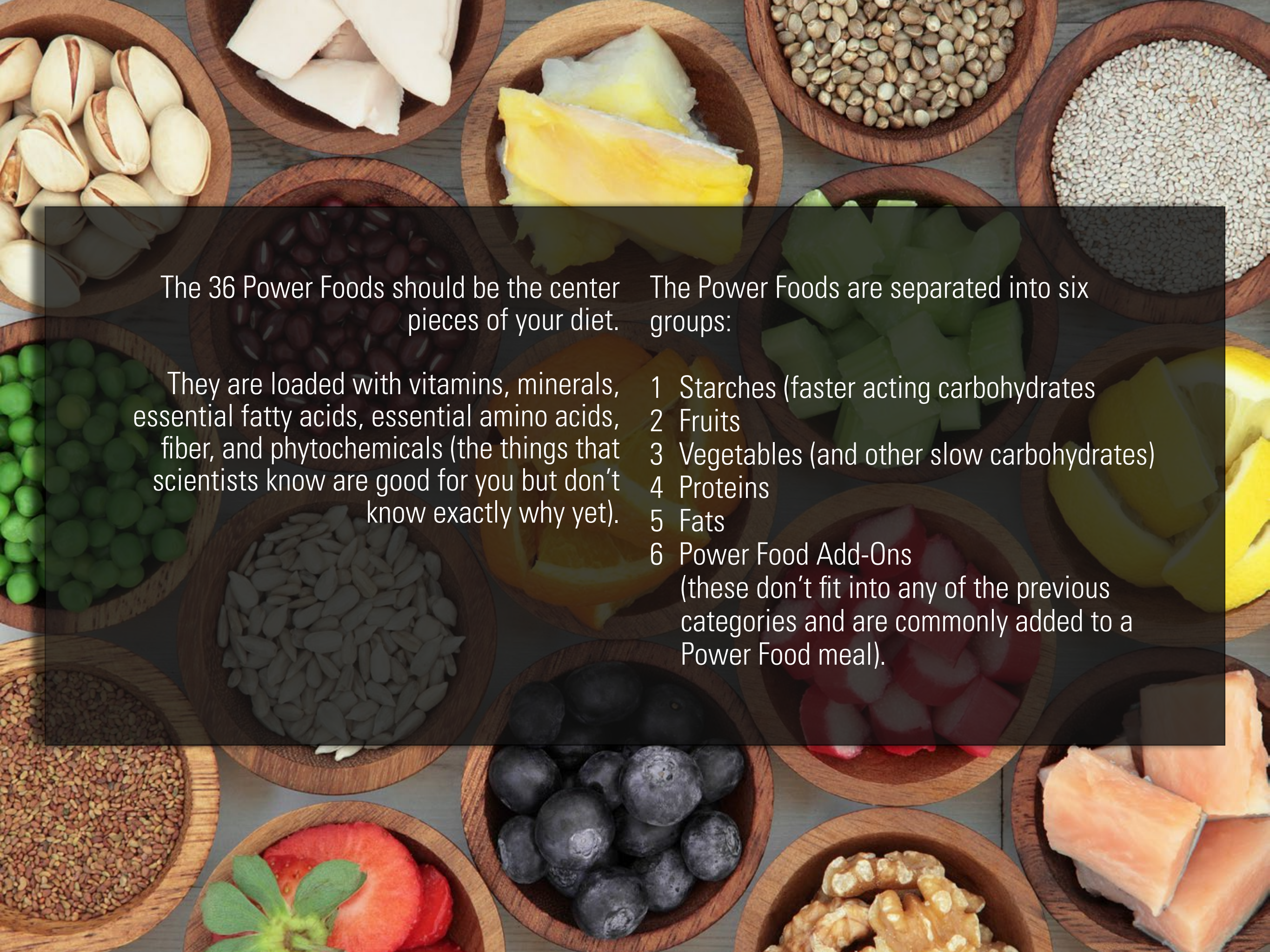


POWER foods guide

36 'Must Eat'
Foods for
Looking &
Feeling Better



The 36 Power Foods should be the center pieces of your diet.

They are loaded with vitamins, minerals, essential fatty acids, essential amino acids, fiber, and phytochemicals (the things that scientists know are good for you but don't know exactly why yet).

The Power Foods are separated into six groups:

- 1 Starches (faster acting carbohydrates)
- 2 Fruits
- 3 Vegetables (and other slow carbohydrates)
- 4 Proteins
- 5 Fats
- 6 Power Food Add-Ons
(these don't fit into any of the previous categories and are commonly added to a Power Food meal).

36 POWER FOODS

Vegetables

- ¹Asparagus
- ²Broccoli
- ³Beets
- ⁴Cauliflower
- ⁵Kale
- ⁶Onions
- ⁷Spinach

Fruit

- ⁸Apples
- ⁹Blueberries
- ¹⁰Oranges
- ¹¹Pumpkin
- ¹²Raspberries
- ¹³Strawberries
- ¹⁴Tomatoes

Starches & Grains

- ¹⁵Quinoa
- ¹⁶Oats
- ¹⁷Yams

Fats


- ¹⁸Avocado
- ¹⁹Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- ²⁰Flaxseed/Flaxseed Oil
- ²¹Walnuts
- ²²Pistachios
- ²³Almonds

Proteins

- ²⁴Lean Poultry
- ²⁵Salmon (wild caught)
- ²⁶100% Grass Fed Beef/Lean Red Meat
- ²⁷Eggs (free range/omega-3)
- ²⁸Kefir or Cottage Cheese (with live cultures)
- ²⁹Greek Yogurt

Power Food Add-Ons

- ³⁰Green Tea
- ³¹Cinnamon
- ³²Garlic
- ³³Cacao (dark chocolate)
- ³⁴Chia Seeds
- ³⁵Turmeric
- ³⁶Ginger



Apples have been long heralded as a Power Food.

In 1100 A.D., the Medical School of Salerno taught its budding physicians about the benefits of apples when treating illnesses of the lungs, bowels, and nervous system.

We all know about the “an apple a day, keeps the doctor away” phrase coined by J.T. Stinson in 1904.

What makes apples so good for you? Antioxidants, Low Impact Carbohydrates, and Fiber.

Antioxidant Power

Compared to other commonly eaten fruits in the U.S. - bananas, oranges, strawberries, and pineapples (to name a few) – apples have the second highest antioxidant activity (cranberries have the most).

A good deal of the antioxidant power is found in the peel (up to 6 times more antioxidants) and not the flesh.

There are many varieties of apples available, but Fuji and Red Delicious have been shown to have the highest levels of antioxidants.

Low Impact Carbs

As a carbohydrate source, apples are a great low impact carb, meaning they have a lower impact on your blood sugar levels compared to breads, grains, and cereals (some of the more common snack foods).

This is reflected in apples’ low glycemic index of only 38. The glycemic index is a rating that scientists give foods based on how fast they cause your blood sugar to rise (the highest score is 100).

An example of food with a high glycemic index is white rice, which has a glycemic index of 72.

Low impact carbohydrates, like apples, are good carbohydrates to eat any time of day.

APPLES
“An Apple A Day...”

Fiber

One medium apple contains 4 grams of fiber. Apples contain a special soluble fiber called pectin. Pectin is one of the reasons that apples make you feel full after you eat them.

Studies have also shown that pectin can decrease bad cholesterol levels.

The Perfect Snack

Apples are small, portable, and versatile; this makes them a perfect snack. They can be quickly paired with other complimentary foods for waistline friendly snacking.

Pair a small apple with one of the following for a healthy snack on the go:

1-2 pieces of string cheese

A small handful of nuts (almonds, cashews, or pistachios)

Peanut butter - a classic snack that has been placed in children's lunch boxes for decades - it is good for adults too.

These 3 snack options are nutritionally well-rounded as they contain low impact carbs, protein, fiber, and healthy fats.

1. Wash Thoroughly

Use soap and water or a fruit and vegetable wash like Fit or Environne. This will help remove the pesticides that have been sprayed on the outside of the apple.

2. Don't Peel the Skin Off— I don't recommend this because, as noted earlier, the skin of an apple contains high levels of health boosting antioxidants.

Keep it Shiny

There are over 7,500 different varieties of apples.

They all have different tastes and textures but one thing is universal. Always look for an apple that has a nice shiny skin. A dull colored skin means the apple won't have the crispness and taste we have all grown to love.

To maintain the best possible taste and flavor, keep your apples in the refrigerator.

The Dirty Dozen

Unfortunately, apples are a member of the Dirty Dozen. The Dirty Dozen is a list of the 12 fruits and vegetables that have been shown to have the highest levels of pesticides.

This doesn't mean that you should stop eating apples.

You can easily minimize your exposure to pesticides while still reaping the health benefits of apples.

3. Buy Organic - Many people are limited in the amount of organic foods that they can purchase due to their increased cost. However, if your budget allows you to purchase some organic foods, those on the Dirty Dozen list, like apples, should be your top priority.



ASPARAGUS

Improve Your Health at Less Than
4 Calories a Stalk

Modern food lovers like to think that we discovered everything, but we can't claim asparagus.

Asparagus was originally found growing on Mediterranean hillsides, and recipes date back to late fourth-century Rome and Apicius Book III, one of the oldest known cookbooks. Early American colonists referred to asparagus as a "food of kings."

Although farmers in California, Washington, and Michigan grow substantial quantities, the U.S. is the world's largest importer of asparagus, with much of it coming from China and Peru. We love our asparagus, and for good reason.

Stalking Good Nutrition

One serving of asparagus - 5 stalks - contains 3 grams of fiber and 60% of your recommended daily intake of folic acid, a vitamin that's essential for mental and physical health. Folic acid is known to prevent birth defects in developing fetuses, and is an essential part of key enzymes and neurotransmitters.

Asparagus also contains glutathione, the major detoxifying antioxidant in your liver. One stalk contains fewer than 4 calories, making it a great tasting, low calorie addition to any meal.

Nature's Hang Over Cure

Asparagus is the perfect food to have the day after a night out with friends. A 2009 study from the Journal of Food Science found that asparagus can boost, by 200%, the effectiveness of 2 key alcohol-metabolizing enzymes in your liver. In addition, asparagus can help replenish your body's supply of glutathione, which gets used up quickly by your liver after you have a couple of drinks.

Functional Fiber

Asparagus contains a unique type of soluble fiber called fructooligosaccharides (FOS), which goes undigested until it reaches your large intestine. From there, it serves as food for the good bacteria that lives in your gut and helps improve your digestive health. Because of its unique ability to support the growth of beneficial bacteria, scientists have even started putting FOS in infant formula. In addition to improving digestion, FOS can help lower triglycerides, decreasing your risk for cardiovascular disease, and improve your body's ability to absorb minerals from your diet.

The Best of the Best

Size matters when buying asparagus. The thicker the stalk, the more tender it will be. Make sure the tips are closed and compact; these are signs of freshness, which will lead to better taste.

Hot and Steamy

For best results, steam your asparagus with the stalks straight up for 5 to 8 minutes, or until they become tender. Top with fresh-squeezed lemon juice, salt, pepper, and a little extra-virgin olive oil for the perfect complement to a salmon filet or grilled steak.

Grill Master

Asparagus is also great grilled using a long, grill pan or cut up into 2-inch pieces. Marinate with some olive oil and sprinkle with a mixed seasoning of your choice and this is a great side to pair with grass fed burgers or chicken sausages.

Stir It Up

Stir-frying asparagus is another fast and easy way to get this power food in your diet. Cut the asparagus stalks diagonally into 2-inch pieces and sauté them in a nonstick pan over medium heat with sesame oil, fresh ginger, and a splash of soy sauce. You can make this a complete meal by adding sliced mushrooms, chicken breast strips, and steamed brown rice.



BEEF (100% Grass fed)

Heart Health Promoter or Destroyer?

Red meat has long been implicated as a food that will destroy your heart health...so how could it be considered a power food?

Let's look at the nutritional power of lean beef and the misinterpretation of scientific research that has given it a bad name.

Red Meat vs. Lean Beef

Much of the confusion about the healthfulness of lean beef comes from the way it is categorized in research studies and talked about. Red meat can mean a lot of different foods that have a very different nutritional profile compared to lean beef.

What is considered red meat?

Hamburger, beef hot dog, processed meat and processed meat sandwich, bacon, beef/pork/lamb as a mixed and main dish.

What is considered lean beef?

A piece of beef that contains <10 g total fats, =4.5 g saturated fat, and <95 mg cholesterol per 3.5 oz. serving.

These two categories describe very different types of foods. In the 5 clinical trials that have compared the effects of eating lean beef vs. chicken/fish, there is no difference in the diet's ability to reduce risk of heart disease.

More Flavor, Less Calories

Beef contains high levels of the amino acid glutamate. Glutamate is responsible for the 5 taste - umami or savory.

By adding other umami flavor rich foods to your meal, you can exponentially enhance the taste and enjoyment of your beef dish without a lot of extra calories. Umami rich toppings to add include: aged cheese, soy sauce, fish sauce, mushrooms, and ripe tomatoes.

So skip the Red Meat and add Lean Beef to your dietary repertoire

10 Essential Nutrients

To be a power food, you need to bring a lot of nutrition without a lot of calories. Lean beef leads the way in this category as it contains 10 essential nutrients:

Protein
Vitamin B12
Selenium
Zinc
Niacin
Vitamin B6
Iron
Phosphorus
Riboflavin

You would need 6 1/2 cups of raw spinach to get as much vitamin B6 as you would get from a 3oz serving of beef. You may also be surprised to know that almost half of the fat found in beef is monounsaturated fat, the same fat in avocados and olive oil.

Where's the Lean Beef

Knowing that lean beef is what you want, the next question is where in the meat case at the supermarket is the lean beef?

It is everywhere. Chances are that you are already buying lean beef without even knowing it. 69% of the beef sold in supermarkets is lean beef.

Currently, 38 cuts of beef meet the USDA criteria for lean. Here are some of the most popular lean cuts:

Strip Steak
T-Bone Steak
Filet Mignon
Sirloin Steak
Top Round
90% lean ground beef
Brisket
Pot Roast

Keys to Cooking Lean Beef:

Cooking delicious lean beef doesn't need to be difficult or tricky. The key is in the temperature. Using a meat thermometer to ensure that you are cooking your meat to the correct temperature, will allow you to not just avoid food borne illness but will ensure that you get meat that is cooked to your liking every time.

Well Done: 170 degrees Fahrenheit
Medium: 160 degrees Fahrenheit
Medium Rare: 145 degrees Fahrenheit



BLUEBERRIES

1 Cup of Blueberries a Day Could Keep
Your Memory from Going Away

Whenever you find an article about anti-aging foods, super foods, or brain boosting foods, you can bet that blueberries are at the top of the list.

Over the past decade, blueberries have achieved the status of the ultimate health food. But, unlike many heavily marketed foods, blueberries actually deserve the title.

Blueberries are one of a limited number of fruits with origins in North America (researchers estimate that blueberries have been around for 13,000 years). They were a long time staple of Native American foragers, and were used for nutritional and medicinal purposes (the reasons behind which science has just begun to uncover - centuries later).

Blueberry Nutrition

One cup of blueberries contains only 80 calories and a healthy 3.5 gram dose of fiber. However, the nutritional power of blueberries won't be found on its nutrition label. The true power of blueberries comes from their deep dark blue color where the anthocyanidins live.

Blueberries & Cardiovascular Disease

Blueberries have been shown to fight America's Silent Killer, high blood pressure. Eating 2 cups of blueberries each day for 8 weeks can lower your blood pressure by 6%, according to a 2010 study in the Journal of Nutrition.

In addition, the people who ate blueberries also had reductions in oxidized LDL cholesterol, the type of bad cholesterol that directly leads to plaque formation in your blood vessels.

Blueberries' Blue Power

Blueberries are loaded with anthocyanidins, an antioxidant similar to those found in pomegranates and dark chocolate. A study in 2004 looked at the antioxidant capacity of 100 different foods and blueberries came out on top. Researchers believe that these powerful antioxidants can improve your heart health and slow the aging of your brain. There is also evidence that they can ward off age-related effects like reduced cognition, and even the progression of full blown neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease.

Some scientists believe that the antioxidants in blueberries work directly within our brains to improve memory as well.

A Little May Be Enough

Researchers from Finland found that you do not need to eat endless amounts of blueberries to reap their health benefits. In fact, eating one cup of blueberries each day is enough to increase antioxidant levels in your blood by up to 50%.

Fresh vs. Frozen

Frozen blueberries should be a staple in your nutritional arsenal.

Since they are quickly frozen shortly after picking, frozen blueberries maintain a high level of their antioxidants (the antioxidants in blueberries can degrade over time when stored on shelves). Frozen blueberries also give you instant access to this power food all year round.

Don't worry about eating them raw or cooked - just eat them. A study published recently showed that the antioxidant power of blueberries is the same either way.

Healthy Blueberry Dessert

Here is a simple frozen blueberry dessert recipe that you can use to curb your sweet tooth late at night instead of reaching for a bowl of ice cream.

In a blender, add together 2 cups of frozen blueberries, 2 cups of low fat plain yogurt, 1 TBSP of Stevia (zero calorie sweetener), and 1 TBSP of orange zest (grate the skin of one quarter of a washed orange against a fine cheese grater). Blend the ingredients together until the mixture is smooth.

Pour the mixture into popsicle containers, ice cube trays, or muffin tins and place in freezer for 1-2 hours to enjoy later on!



GREENTEA

3 Great Ways Green Tea Will Make You Leaner & Happier

Tea is the second most popular drink in the world, behind only water.

The earliest documented use of tea as a beverage dates back to China in 59 B.C. It has been used for medicinal purposes for over 3,000 years.

Green, Black, White and Oolong tea all come from the same plant (*Camellia Sinensis*).

Each variety of tea is picked, processed, and manufactured differently - resulting in different tastes, nutrient compositions, and health-boosting properties.

Antioxidant Power of Green Tea

Green tea contains higher levels of the antioxidants called polyphenols and catechins, as compared to black or oolong teas. You may have heard of EGCG (epigallocatechin gallate), the most abundant (and well studied) antioxidant in green tea.

Relax with Green Tea

In addition to antioxidants, green tea also contains high levels of the amino acid theanine. Theanine is responsible for green tea's relaxation and anti-stress effects.

In one study, researchers followed over 4,000 Japanese individuals for 11 years and found that the people who drank the most green tea were least likely to suffer symptoms of psychological distress.

Green Tea and Weight Loss

Green tea is a popular additive to weight loss supplements as it is consistently shown to help boost weight loss. But you don't need a supplement to reap these benefits.

Drinking green tea (not the de-caFFEinated version) can aid in increasing your weight loss by enhancing several different fat burning pathways in your body, from increasing the expression of fat burning genes, to properly stimulating your nervous system, to enhancing abdominal fat loss.

Nature's Appetite Suppressant

Green tea can also help you feel more satisfied after a meal - a feeling that is often lacking from most dieters' dining experiences. New research published in Nutrition Journal showed that drinking a 10 ounce cup of green tea while eating lunch increased study participants' feelings of fullness and decreased their desire to eat more of their favorite foods.

Increased levels of neurotransmitter norepinephrine can help reduce food intake and increase the feeling of fullness. The antioxidants in green tea prevent the breakdown of norepinephrine, helping you eat less.

Next time you have a food craving, snack on a handful of pistachios and a large cup of green tea. The anti-hunger effects of green tea, combined with the protein and fat in the pistachios, are a powerful enough combination to curb any craving attack.

Say No to Bottled Teas

Skip the bottled artificially-sweetened teas sold in stores.

An independent food lab based out of North Brunswick, New Jersey found that most of these products have only 6% of the antioxidants found in regular green tea.

The Perfect Cup of Tea

The bottom line about green tea is that you should drink it - but how? To make the best tasting cup of tea, allow the water to sit for one minute after it has boiled, then let the tea bag sit in the water (also known as steeping) for 1-1:30 minutes or follow the tea guide instructions (some loose teas suggest 5-7 minutes for steeping).

The longer you steep the tea, the more antioxidants will be drawn from the tea leaves. However, antioxidants tend to taste bitter. So, the longer you steep your tea, the more bitter it will taste. Research from Temple University shows that Americans in general do not like overly flavored or bitter green tea. If green tea isn't instantly your favorite beverage, try steeping it for a shorter amount of time. You can still get the most antioxidants from your tea by re-using the tea bag and having another cup.





Once quarantined as the food you must avoid if you had heart issues, a new growing body of research touting their nutritional benefits have caused eggs to rise from their nutritional grave to take their rightful place as a true power food.

Cholesterol, Eggs, and Your Heart

Improving heart health has long been about lowering your cholesterol. It would seem to make complete sense that if you wanted to decrease the amount of cholesterol in your blood stream then you should decrease the amount of cholesterol you are eating. Eggs pack a whopping 200mg of cholesterol per serving (essentially the limit of recommended intake on 'heart healthy diets') making eggs public enemy #1 when it comes to reducing dietary and thus blood cholesterol levels.

Here's the good news...for most of us the amount of cholesterol that you eat doesn't have that much of an effect on the levels of cholesterol in your blood. Research shows that only 30% of people experience significant increases in cholesterol levels after following a diet high in cholesterol. After looking at the dietary habits of 100,000 people, a group of researchers from Harvard University reported that daily egg consumption in healthy people did not lead to an increase in risk of coronary heart disease.

Whole Eggs and "Good Cholesterol"

Researchers at the University of Connecticut wanted to test the power of whole eggs vs cholesterol/fat free egg substitutes. They found that men who ate three large whole eggs per day increased their HDL or good cholesterol by 20%. There was also no impact on LDL or bad cholesterol. The people who ate the egg substitutes didn't experience any change in either risk factor for heart disease.

EGGS
Health Food Phoenix



Gold Standard of Protein Quality

Once you can take your focus off the eggs and cholesterol debate, you are able to see that eggs are a nutritional powerhouse, especially when it comes to protein.

Eggs have always been the gold standard of protein. When protein quality is measured, researchers compared the protein food that they are measuring to eggs.

One egg contains 6-7 grams of the best protein that you will find. Full of essential amino acids that are readily absorbed by your body.

Whole Egg vs. Egg White

The popularity of eating only egg whites came from the drive to eat less fat and cholesterol (as all the fat and cholesterol is in the egg yolk).

Egg whites are great but they are nutritionally a one trick pony - protein. An egg white contains all protein ~3 grams; the rest of the nutrients, protein and fat are hiding in the golden center, aka: the yolk.

Egg yolks are much more than just protein. They contain key fat soluble vitamins A, D, and E, a muscle building nutrient.

If you opt to buy eggs from chickens that were fed omega-3 rich feed, the health promoting omega-3 fats in the feed transfer to the egg, giving you as much as 150mg of the long chain omega-3 fat DHA.

Egg yolks also contain leutin and zeaxanthin. Choline is an essential nutrient for brain health, while leutin and zeaxanthin are two potent antioxidants that may help prevent age-related problems with vision. When you think about antioxidants, eggs are probably not the first food to come to mind, but a study published in Food Chemistry found that the antioxidant capacity of eggs was equal to that of the poster child of good health: apples!



KEFIR

The Champagne of Dairy

Kefir is derived from the Turkish word “keif” which means “good-feeling.” It has been around for centuries, originating in the Russian Caucasian mountains.

Kefir gets the nickname, “champagne of dairy”, due to the fact that it foams and fizzes when you shake it up. Kefir looks like drinkable yogurt, however, its nutritional profile varies from yogurt and its beneficial bacteria (e.g. probiotic) content is much more robust.

Perfect Ratio

Plain kefir has a near 1:1 ratio of protein to carbohydrates making it a great all-purpose drink, base for a smoothie, or milk substitute in granola or oats.

10 Billion Bugs!!

Yogurt is well known for its good bacteria but the amount of probiotics in kefir dwarfs that found in yogurt. Yogurt is generally cultured for 2-3 hours while kefir is cultured for upwards of 16 hours! This yields 7-10 billion CFUs (the units used to measure probiotic bacteria).

What are these good bacteria going to do for you?

More research is showing that the bacteria in your digestive tract can not only communicate with your body, but it can actually influence how your body functions - impacting things like stress and inflammatory responses.

Coating your digestive track with good bacteria, like that found in kefir, is a simple way to keep your front lines of defense against disease and infection working the best it can.

Other research shows that kefir can actually have antibacterial and antimicrobial effects. These effects can even impact your teeth.

Kefir and Dental Health

When you think about fermented dairy products, you probably don’t think about dental health, but a recent study published in the Journal of Contemporary Dental Practices found that drinking kefir was just as effective as fluoride mouthwash at removing bacteria that cause cavities.

Kefir and Immune Function

A study from Turkey found that after just 2 weeks of drinking kefir daily, study participants experienced improvements in multiple facets of their immune system.

Kefir's Nutrient Package

In addition to the protein and probiotics that we've already discussed, kefir contains several other key nutrients such as vitamin D, K, a variety of B vitamins, and calcium.

Readily Available Nutrients

The beneficial bacteria in kefir start working for you before you even drink it. During the fermentation process and in the bottle on the supermarket shelves, they are hard at work breaking down the dairy sugar lactose and partially digesting the proteins found in kefir.

1 cup of kefir has only 2g of lactose compared to 11g in regular milk. This is great news if you have issues digesting lactose (e.g. lactose intolerant).

A study published in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association found that kefir can help people with lactose intolerance digest lactose better.



Ultimate Kefir Smoothie

This snack sized smoothie is a great way to add kefir to your diet.

It contains blueberries which are rich in a particular type of antioxidant called anthocyanins.

Anthocyanins can be both absorbed by your body or used by the good bacteria in your digestive tract for fuel.

This smoothie is designed to not only provide your body with the probiotics it needs for good digestion, but also the fuel needed to support them.

Super Kefir Smoothie

1 cup low fat plain kefir

2/3 cup wild blueberries

1 Tbsp flaxseed meal

2-3 ice cubes

Up to 1 cup additional water (optional
add based on consistency preference)

Add ingredients to blender and blend
until smooth.



OLIVE OIL

The Secret of the Mediterraneans

Olive oil is one of the most highly touted heart healthy foods, but like most foods that are 'good for you' there is a wide amount of variation in the healthfulness of a food, depending on the version of the food you buy.

Olive oil is no exception. Olive oil can be extra virgin, virgin, first cold pressed, chemically extracted, etc. Let's look at the benefits of olive oil and how you can ensure that you are getting the best olive oil for your health.

Olive Oil Processing

Extra virgin olive oil is produced from mechanically squeezing the oil out of olives in a temperature-controlled environment (often referred to as 'cold pressed') so that heat does not play a role in disrupting the naturally occurring unsaturated fats and antioxidants in the oil.

Extra virgin olive oil is considered the highest quality olive oil from both a taste and nutritional perspective.

Healthful Components of Extra Virgin Olive Oil

The Mediterranean diet is often described as being 'rich in monounsaturated fats' of which extra virgin olive oil is championed as being the key to this fact, (one Spanish survey found that 13% of calories consumed were from olive oil). However, the Mediterranean diet is more than extra virgin olive oil and extra virgin olive oil is more than just monounsaturated fats.

The polyphenol antioxidants found in the highest abundance in first cold pressed extra virgin olive oil have been implicated in providing neuroprotection and improvements in vascular health.

Newer research has found that extra virgin olive oil contains "electrophilic fatty acid nitroalkenes"- a class of compounds that can stimulate anti-inflammatory gene expression. The monounsaturated fats found in olive oil are good, but the antioxidants and bioactive compounds found in extra virgin olive oil are better.



Getting the Best Out of Your Olive Oil

The California Olive Oil Council recommends buying olive oil that has been harvested and cold pressed in the last 18 months (12 months is even better).

- Once you open the bottle it is best to use it within the next 30 days.
- Heat wreaks havoc on the antioxidants in olive oil (this is why it is cold pressed), so it is best used on cold dishes or cooked with at very low heat.
- Store your olive oil in a cool dark place to further protect the antioxidants in the oil from going bad.
- Find a brand that you can trust. An analysis from the Olive Oil Center at UC Davis found that 69% of extra virgin olive oils they tested did not meet the standards set from the International Olive Council.
- If your olive oil has a bitter or spiciness to it, that is good! This is a reflection of a high antioxidant content.

Olive oil is very good for you, but take the time to ensure that you are actually getting the right kind of extra virgin olive oil, which will confer the health benefits that you are looking for. If you weren't already convinced about the benefits of extra virgin olive oil, I leave you with the results from one more study.

An analysis from the PREDIMED study showed that for every 10g/d of extra virgin olive oil participants consumed, their associated risk of cardiovascular disease decreased by 7%.

Olive Oil Acidity

Virgin olive oil differs slightly from extra virgin olive oil in that it has a higher acidity, 3% vs. $<0.8\%$.

The acidity is technically a measure of the amount of free fatty acids found in olive oil. Acidity is a little known, but effective marker, of olive oil quality.

The type of olive, soil, pressing, and processing of the olive oil are all reflected in its acidity. Certain types of olives will naturally have lower acidity than others, but as long as an olive is cold pressed within 24 hours of picking, it should have an acidity of 0.8% or less.

Olive oil lovers also find that acidity levels greater than 1% lead to an unpleasant taste.



SALMON

Healthiest Food You Can Eat?

What do the healthiest people in the world consistently eat?
Fish. What do Americans hardly eat? Fish.

The most recent nutritional data shows that the average American gets more protein each week from grain/bread products than they do fish!

Fish, especially oily fish like salmon, contain a nutritionally complex and beneficial blend of protein, omega-3 fats (EPA and DHA), selenium, potassium, and vitamin B12.

The omega-3 fats EPA and DHA are the most well-known health enhancers found in salmon.

Omega-3s - EPA and DHA

EPA and DHA are two long chain omega-3 fats that have potent effects on several major systems in your body, including the heart and brain. Research shows that EPA and DHA can actually improve the electrochemical connections in your heart. Enhancing your diet with EPA and DHA has also been shown to decrease your resting heart rate, which allows you to burn more calories during heart rate based training. A study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition showed that this effect leads to greater weight loss.

Farmed vs Wild

When buying salmon, you are usually given the choice of farmed vs. wild. The differences between these two categories and within the category of 'farmed' can be confusing so let's look at a couple key points.

- Farmed salmon generally has more omega-3s than wild salmon. It also has more omega-6 fats (more on the ratio of omega-3 / omega-6 fats in the next paragraph).

- Some farmed salmon contains additives (not good) to enhance the color of the salmon, making it the orange/red color you expect. You usually find this on the ingredients list.

- Wild salmon is by far the best option with the healthiest Omega-3/6 ratio along with no additives; however, it is significantly more expensive. This cost may be prohibitive for some people so know that quality farm raised salmon (sustainably raised is key here) is better than no salmon at all.

Cooking Ruins the Benefits?

A common concern that people have about salmon and the beneficial omega-3 fats that are found in salmon has to do with cooking.

Generally, heat is bad for EPA and DHA because it readily turns these fats rancid.

Fortunately this is not the case with salmon. There seems to be something about the omega-3 fats in salmon that gives them protection against oxidation and going rancid.

Researchers think the protection comes from being inside the food matrix of the salmon along with the presence of beta-carotene, a precursor to vitamin A and potent antioxidant (that gives salmon its natural orange/red color) which protects against the negative stress from heat.

Cook your salmon and feel good about it!

Mercury Concerns??

One concern that people often have when it comes to eating salmon is mercury.

Do the health benefits of the omega-3 fats outweigh the potential risk of consuming mercury?

According to a review of the research published by two Harvard University scientists in the Journal of the American Medical Association "the benefits of fish intake exceed the potential risks".

One of the keys has to do with fish size. Fish concentrate mercury in their bodies over time. The smaller the fish, the less mercury it will take up and thus the lower the health risk.

In fact, salmon contain some of the lowest mercury levels of any fish ($<0.05\mu\text{g}/\text{d}$).

Omega-3 vs. Omega-6 Ratio

The importance of the omega-3 / omega-6 ratio in our diet has been theorized to play a role in health promotion and fighting inflammation using the general assumption that omega-3 fats are anti-inflammatory and omega-6 fats are pro-inflammatory.

A perturbation in this ratio in the American diet (towards excessive omega-6 fats) is thought to be the driver of much of the obesity and disease that you see today.

Research has shown this to be a good fish story as the ratio of omega-3 / omega-6 fats in our diet doesn't seem to have much impact on our health, but instead it is the total amount of omega-3 fats in our diet that has the greatest impact for good.

Salmon vs. Supplements

Maybe you don't like eating salmon or you don't eat with enough frequency to reap the benefits of the heart healthy omega-3s - what can you do? Are supplements just as effective? The good news is yes, they are! Research shows that your body benefits from getting EPA and DHA from a supplement as it does from oily fish like salmon.



WALNUTS

Enjoy This One Food That Will Protect
Your Heart, Fight Cancer, and
Sharpen Your Mind

For several decades, nuts were withheld from a healthy diet due to their higher fat content. However, we now know that nuts are an extremely important part of a heart healthy diet and walnuts could be the best for you.

Ancient Power Food

People have been eating walnuts for thousands of years, with reports of walnut trees being grown as far back as the Roman Empire in 7,000 B.C. In ancient Persia, walnuts were a food for royalty.

Their popularity caused them to be traded and bartered all across the world by English merchants, earning them the name English Walnuts, despite never being grown in England.

Today, walnuts are grown all over the world, but California is responsible for 99% of the walnuts used in the United States.

Let's look at some of the health benefits of walnuts and how you can start including them in your diet.

Walnuts and Your Heart

In 2003, a study was published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition which reviewed all of the available research on walnuts and their impact on cardiovascular disease.

The researchers found that eating walnuts consistently will reduce the risk of heart disease. Many scientists believe that eating just 1.5oz of walnuts each day is enough to produce this reduced risk of cardiovascular disease.

Walnuts and Cancer

An incredible study using animals to investigate the effects that eating walnuts has on breast cancer, showed that daily walnut consumption slowed the growth of breast cancer tumors by half.

Walnuts and Your Mind

More animal research published in the British Journal of Nutrition showed that eating walnuts daily was shown to reverse age-related cognitive decline. The ability of walnuts to impact so many different diseases and aspects of your health is most likely due to their broad nutrient package which fights inflammation.

A background image featuring a close-up of several walnuts in a wooden bowl at the top left, with green leaves and more walnuts scattered across the rest of the frame. The text is overlaid on a dark, semi-transparent background.

A Nutrient Package That is Hard to Beat

Walnuts are a very versatile health food with several unique health boosting components. Like most nuts, walnuts are high in good fats.

One serving of walnuts contains 13 grams of polyunsaturated fats (including the coveted omega-3 fats). Decades of scientific research show that this type of fat will reduce your risk of heart disease and diabetes.

You may not realize that walnuts also contain extremely high levels of antioxidants.

Researchers from the University of Oslo in Norway found that walnuts contained more antioxidants than 1,111 other foods tested, second only to blackberries.

Antioxidants play an important role in our bodies, by fighting molecules in our bodies called free radicals, which, if left to their own devices, can accelerate signs of aging and cardiovascular disease.

One serving of walnuts, just less than 1/4 cup, contains 2 grams of fiber and is a good source of two important minerals: magnesium and phosphorous.

Walnuts in Your Diet

So how can you add walnuts to your diet?

Walnuts can be added, along with blueberries, to Greek yogurt for a nutritious and fast breakfast.

They also are the perfect addition to smoothies, as they have a neutral flavor and they won't settle to the bottom of your blender like almonds.

At lunchtime, you can replace the nutritionally void croutons on your salad with walnuts. You will still have the added crunch that croutons bring, but you'll be getting over 2 grams of heart-protecting omega-3 fat, alpha linolenic acid and no refined carbohydrates.

Walnuts have 5 times more alpha linolenic acid than pecans, and most nuts don't have any.

Ground up walnuts go great on top of salmon or mixed into your favorite chili.

Or, just add a small handful of walnuts as a mid-afternoon snack instead of reaching for chips or pretzels.



YOGURT

The Oldest Power Food

Fermented dairy products, like yogurt, have been consumed by humans (and their precursors) for over 12,000 years.

In central Asia, people would milk their animals and then carry the milk in containers made from animal stomachs.

The natural enzymes in these containers would curdle the milk yielding a yogurt-like food. Yogurt wasn't just for Neolithic man, it was even a power food for the Genghis Khan and his army.

With the benefits of yogurt becoming more and more apparent with each published research study, the popularity of yogurt has continued to grow with the advent of new types and varieties of yogurt. Here's what to look for...

Greek vs. Regular Yogurt

The popularity of Greek yogurt has exploded recently bringing lots of attention to the nutritional benefits of yogurt. Greek yogurt differs from regular yogurt in a few ways.

The process of making Greek yogurt involves straining, which removes water, sugars, and some whey protein (one of the two dairy proteins). This straining process is what makes even the fat free Greek yogurt so thick and creamy (a taste and texture usually only associated with high fat foods).

Because some whey protein is lost during the straining process, Greek yogurt has higher levels of casein (the other dairy protein), this also aids in making Greek yogurt thick and creamy.

Texture aside, there are several key nutritional differences between regular and Greek yogurt.

Greek yogurt has almost twice the protein and half of the carbohydrates as regular yogurt. This makes it a great snack or addition to any meal when you need to bump up the protein.

Yogurt - The Complete Nutritional Package

The great nutritional package that you get with yogurt is best highlighted with respect to bone health. Dairy products play a big role in the nutritional contribution to bone health, packing calcium, protein, vitamin D, potassium, and phosphorus. Many of these nutrients are also essential for maintaining optimal blood pressure.

It is hard to find a food that is better to snack on or add to a meal than yogurt. With all the different varieties, it should be easy to find one that fits your liking.



“Live Cultures”

Yes, yogurt is a good source of protein, especially Greek yogurt. But the true power of yogurt comes from the live cultures. The good bacteria used in the creation of yogurt (and sometimes added after the fact) provides you with key reinforcements to your digestive tract.

More research is starting to show that the bacteria in your digestive tract has the power to communicate with your body and your brain, modifying how your immune system functions, what hormones that are released, and even your metabolic rate.

There are still lots of details to work out regarding how exactly the bacteria in our gut communicates and manipulates functions in our bodies, but it is very clear that taking the time to curate the best bacteria in your digestive tract is an important step to good health (and a healthy weight!).

Yogurt helps you get there easier.

Fresh Yogurt

In order to truly reap the benefits of the good bacteria found in yogurt, it is important to eat fresh yogurt.

Some yogurt products are processed at high temperatures to ensure a longer shelf-life.

These yogurts will contain “long-life” or “UHT” on the labels.

Avoid these yogurts, as the heating process kills the good bacteria that we want.

Plain vs. Flavored Yogurt

My rule of thumb for clients is to always opt for plain yogurt and add your own flavoring.

Whether it is yogurt with fruit on the bottom or ‘lite’ yogurt full of natural or artificial flavorings and sweeteners, you can do better nutritionally by adding your own fruit and flavors.

Buying yogurt with the fruit added or ‘on the bottom’ can quickly turn your power food into a dessert. Be wary of the sugar content of yogurts that contain fruit and flavoring (this means ‘vanilla’ yogurt too) - it adds up quickly.

Adding your own fruit (like blueberries or strawberries) will get you more fruit per serving and less sugar.

By incorporating these 36 Power Foods into your diet, we hope you'll find success in meeting your health and fitness goals!

Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions or comments on what other nutritional topics you'd like us to cover.

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