

Shopping For Superfoods



The term 'superfood' is fairly commonplace these days amongst people discussing diets and healthy eating. It first became popular in the 1990's and refers to a group of foods that are particularly rich in nutrients. It is important to have a diet rich in nutrients, for both children and adults alike, yet all foods contain nutrients. So what exactly are the qualities necessary to entitle these 'superfoods' to such a prodigious name?

Superfoods occur naturally and contain such high nutritional value that they actually help support our health by fighting off disease. Different superfoods provide different types of nutrients. They are believed to support the body's function by fighting cancer cells, regulating blood pressure, supporting immune function and improving digestive health.

Some superfoods have been used in specific locations around the world for centuries, yet have only recently been discovered by the rest of the world. Other superfoods have been living amongst your other pantry items, without receiving the high praise that they deserve. These include foods such as sweet potato, barley, broccoli, oats, almonds and even lentils!

Here is a list of the top 5 superfoods that you should consider adding to your shopping list:

Acai berries: Considered by many nutritionists to be the #1 superfood, these Amazonian berries are considered nature's best anti-aging aid because they contain the

highest level of antioxidants compared to any other food source. They are also very high in amino acids and essential fatty acids and are fantastic for boosting your immune system.

Often these berries can be found dried in combination with other fruits, seeds and nuts (trail mix), or can be purchased as a freeze dried powder and added to other meals, both sweet and savoury alike.

Blueberries: These delicious berries have been dubbed 'Brain boosters' amongst other things, as they have high levels of flavonoids which have been linked to improving memory, cognitive function as well as slowing down the decline in mental function that comes with growing older. They also contain ellagic acid, which has been shown to help fight against cancerous cells.

Blueberries are best eaten fresh, but they still contain the majority of their nutrients when frozen.

Goji berries: This Himalayan fruit, that tastes both sweet and slightly salty, has become popular as a dried fruit with nuts. Literally packed full of nutrients, these berries have been used medicinally in China for centuries. They are high in antioxidants as well as iron, vitamin C, vitamin B and beta carotene. They are said to improve liver function, blood circulation as well as support immune function. They are also believed to increase libido and support limb function. They are commonly found as dried snacks on their own, or sometimes in combination with chocolate or other fruit and nuts.

Kale: This leafy green vegetable has become very popular over the past few years and with good reason! Kale contains high levels of iron, beta carotene, foliate and vitamin C, all of which are essential to a healthy diet. Kale is also packed full of protein and fibre, as well as being low in carbs or calories, which means it is a great way to feel satisfied and full without fear of putting on any extra pounds.

Natural/Greek Yogurt: That's right, yogurt is a superfood! This delicious and diverse dairy product is actually alive with active cultures, known as friendly bacteria or probiotics, the two most beneficial being acidophilus and bifidus which are essential to healthy digestion. Yogurt also has 50 times more calcium than milk and is packed full of magnesium, phosphate, potassium and riboflavin.