

super foods = super YOU!

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SUPERFOODS

At home or in a restaurant superfoods are available and we either choose to eat them or not. The fact remains... that those who eat better... live better and look better. Our genes are more dynamic than we once realized and changing our lifestyle can help us change our genes according to a study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Hopefully this 'health refresher' inspires you the next time you're planning a grocery list!



As a first generation American born to Greek immigrant parents, I was raised on a pure Mediterranean diet that I have practiced my whole life. The subject of nutrition has been a priority in my life, and led me to pursue healthy eating along with fitness and sharing it with others on a professional platform. Superfoods so important in our diets, and yes they stem from a Mediterranean diet. I'd like to put a bit of a spin on the list and make each food a little more enticing.

Seafood: Topping healthy eating is wild salmon. But our diet must have variety to hold our interest so consider these alternatives: albacore, sardines, tuna, and Atlantic Mackerel.

Berries—Especially Blueberries: When thinking of blueberries or any berries for that matter 'topping' your healthy eating list should be blueberries—any berries are terrific toppings for a variety of foods: Cereal, yogurt, any dessert you can think of. Maybe a marinated berry salad that includes organic strawberries, raspberries and açai berries, or a tasty and nutritious smoothie. It takes seconds to drop a handful of blueberries on anything you are about to eat!

Spinach: It is the best. But if you aren't a full-fledged spinach salad fan, then by all means try a sauté mixture by adding mustard greens, Swiss chard, collard greens, bok choy, or kale cooked in olive oil and fresh garlic. The combination is a healthy addition to any main course.

Broccoli: The miracle vegetable. Definitely give raw broccoli a chance. Need an extra bit of taste to go along with it? With raw broccoli try dipping it in humus, or a yogurt dip. Nothing beats it for a nutritious and quick snack.

Nuts: For sure convenient and very tasty raw, but how about roasting a mixture of almonds, walnuts, hazelnuts, pecans, and pistachios—no added oil necessary—and eat them warm? Both a satisfying and nutritious treat where the flavor of each nut comes alive.

Extra Virgin Olive Oil: It is absolutely true that a teaspoon of Olive oil a day keeps the doctor away. Extra virgin olive oil should be a priority in any healthy diet, but a variety of other oils including Avocado, Walnut, and Flaxseed oils are also versatile options, and they add a healthy addition to the usual flavors in your foods, plus these oils carry exceptional nutritional benefits as well.



Flaxseed: Be sure to choose organic and also consider this: Besides adding Flaxseed to your cereal, try sprinkling it over any variety of salads. Another healthy hint: Did you know that you can replace the oil that you currently use in your baking with flaxseed? Keep in mind that the ratio is one half the amount of oil that is required in a recipe.

Avocados: Simply awesome, tasty and excellent on anything—anytime—breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks! A guacamole side dip is a great source of nutrition as a 'superfood' by adding a red onion, tomatoes, lemon and a few spices. YUM!

Pomegranate Juice: Here's a twist that you might not have thought about: How about start using pomegranate juice in your 'dipping' sauces for grilled chicken and shrimp? And, it's also a delicious addition to salsas? For a yummy drink have pomegranate juice on hand at the bar while you're mixing cocktails as it adds a tasty punch to any punch.

Tofu: Of course, tofu is amazing in Miso soup, but how about getting creative by adding tofu to your scrambled eggs for breakfast or in a frittata; try baking it with garlic and you have crispy garlic tofu. Speaking of garlic to add taste to everything we eat... let's not forget the added health and increased taste that red onions and tomatoes bring to your table. These three flavor enhancing additions spark up everything you make, plus they are nature's most simple superfoods to use in our day-to-day cooking to add flavor and great nutritional value at the same time.

Oatmeal: This is the absolute best way to start our day. Oatmeal is the easiest and most nutritious snack to throw together last minute. Try 'steel cut' oatmeal for a change, and then add nuts, cinnamon, and maybe some raisins to jazz things up. Another day-starter and my all time breakfast favorite is simply a wonderful delicious treat: flourless oatmeal pancakes are amazing! Check out the recipe for 'Flour-less' Oatmeal Pancakes on the "Cheerful Kitchen" website.

Beans and Lentils: These are a quick and simple add-on to burgers, stews and most certainly tacos, but let's never forget also soups. Beans and lentils not only offer food an extra texture bonus, but they also take on the flavors of what they are cooked with! No kidding. There is excellent nutritional value in mixing this combo into your food. ■