

THE EASY WAY TO...

SUPERCHARGE YOUR HEALTH: WITH SUPERFOODS

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Introduction – What Is a Superfood and Why Do They Always Seem to Change?

Every year, usually in the first few months of the year, health and wellness experts release information on superfoods. You see articles in magazines. You see reports on the local news. And the topic is covered well on blogs and social media.

Like annual trends, resolution tips and success strategies, superfoods become a hot topic. But what exactly are superfoods, why do they change every year, and why should you care? Let's look at those three questions individually.

What are Superfoods?

Superfoods are foods that have a high level of nutrients in them. They are always whole foods, meaning they're not processed. They are often foods that most people don't eat very often and, in most cases, they have a unique nutritional quality.

For example, kale was a well-known superfood the past two years. Kale is high in both vitamin A and vitamin C. In fact, a cup of kale has more than 100% of your RDA for those vitamins.

Superfoods often have added benefits. For example, they might be great for weight loss or beneficial for a healthy gut and digestive system. Another example of a superfood with a unique benefit was fish oil. It has tremendous brain boosting and inflammation reducing benefits. But fish oil and kale are so last year. This year has new, different, and perhaps odd additions to the superfoods list.



Why Do Superfoods Change?

There are actually a handful of reasons why superfoods change every year. One reason is that there's a food industry behind them. When you can find the next best thing, you're going to market it, right?

However, beyond the business reason for new superfoods each year is this... nutritionists, health experts, dieticians, doctors, and health researchers and scientists are always testing, studying, learning, and releasing their findings.

Superfoods are announced because they're recently discovered foods or the benefits of the food are new discoveries. It's pretty amazing, when you think about it. The fact that we're still finding new and beneficial foods to fuel and heal our bodies. This brings us to the third question.

Why Should You Care About Superfoods?

You eat healthy. You exercise. You take good care of yourself. Why should you care about superfoods? It makes good sense to know what nature has created and provided for you, and how it can impact your health. We're going to look at 10 superfoods. We'll take a look at what they are, how they benefit your health, and offer some ideas on how to add them to your diet.

Will you try all 10 of these superfoods? Maybe. It can be fun to try new foods, especially when they're good for you.

Will all of them offer you a benefit and be added to your diet on a regular basis? Maybe not. But that's okay. Knowledge is power and when you know all the amazing superfoods available to you right now, you can make the best decision about your health and wellbeing.

So, let's get started and look at 10 of the best superfoods.

10 Superfoods to Include in Your Diet

Gelatin

Gelatin probably isn't something that's new to you. You've had Jell-O, right? Gelatin comes from the bones, skins and tissues, of animals. (If you're a vegan or vegetarian, this superfood isn't for you.) These parts are boiled, and collagen is extracted. This collagen is protein-rich collagen.

Collagen has a large number of health benefits.

- It's a natural anti-inflammatory that promotes healthy joints and tissues.
- It's great for your skin, hair, and nails. Many skin care experts recommend collagen supplements to their clients.
- It improves digestive health.
- Collagen is protein rich. There are six grams in a tablespoon.

Collagen doesn't really have any taste, so it can be added to almost anything. You can add it to a smoothie, for example, to get more protein. You can also add it to your soups and stews. Some people love to add it to their morning coffee when they add their organic cream.

How much should you eat? The general recommendation is four tablespoons a day. It's important to make sure that your collagen comes from grass-fed and hormone free animals.

Who is it for? Collagen is for anyone. However, it can be particularly beneficial for those who want to improve their hair and skin, and for regular exercisers.

Avocado Oil

Avocados are amazing sources of healthy fats. And avocado oil is as healthy for you as olive oil, plus it tastes better. It also offers a wealth of nutrients that other oils just don't offer including:

- Carotenoids are plant pigments. They are the orange, yellow, and red colors you find in fruit. They're found in avocados as well and are more bioavailable, meaning they are more digestible and absorbable, than in other foods. They offer protective properties, including anti-inflammatory, immune boosting, and antioxidant properties.

- Avocados and avocado oil also are high in potassium, lutein, magnesium, folate, choline, glutathione, and phytosterols (good, natural, cholesterol).
- Avocado oil has been shown to improve heart health.
- It improves your vision with lutein.
- It reduces aging through anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.
- And because of its satiety factor, it can help you lose weight.



How do you use it? You can use avocado oil like you would any oil. Replace vegetable oil or olive oil with avocado oil in your recipes. You can even use it in baked goods. Don't worry, your cookies won't taste like avocados.

How much should you consume? There's no real amount of avocado oil that you're supposed to eat. Simply replace your other oils with avocado oil and enjoy the benefits. This superfood is for everyone.

Maqui Berries

All berries are good for you, right? They are packed with antioxidants and have the added benefit of being sweet, so your cravings are satisfied. The maqui berry is a dark purple berry that grows wild throughout parts of southern Chile. It's actually the color of this berry that gives it one of its most powerful nutrition properties.

Maqui berries are high in delphinidins, color pigments that are also antioxidants. The delphinidins in maqui berries have strong anti-inflammatory abilities. This means that they reduce the risk of degenerative

diseases that involve inflammation, they boost your immune system, and they've been shown to slow down the growth of colon cancer cells.

They help reduce the pain and inflammation from arthritis, and they have cholesterol lowering heart healthy properties. Interestingly, they don't cause a spike in blood sugar.

Because maqui berries aren't presently cultivated, you will have to be deliberate about finding them. You can find them at Whole Foods. You can also buy them online. If you have a local health food store, ask them to carry the berry. You can also find the juice or maqui berry powder.

Like any berry, they're sweet and taste delicious. And they're really for anyone wants to enjoy the benefits of a fruit that is high in anti-inflammatory properties that doesn't spike your blood sugar. If you want to lose weight, this is a great way to tame your sweet tooth.

You can add them to smoothies, drink the juice, add the powder to smoothies or enjoy the berries as a nice snack.

Turmeric

Turmeric isn't anything new. It's a root. It's often ground up and dried and used as a spice or flavoring. Turmeric is prevalent in Indian food. It's also found in mustard. But turmeric is more than a simple yellow spice. It has amazing health properties, including:

- Mood balance
- Anti-inflammatory properties
- Balances blood sugar
- Improves cholesterol
- Strengthens immune system
- Repairs tissues
- Reduces pain and damage to muscles, joints, and tissues
- Blood sugar balance

It's also a good source of fiber, vitamin B6, potassium, vitamin C, and magnesium.

Consuming turmeric takes a little bit of imagination. You can take turmeric supplements. They come in capsules. You can also enjoy a nice cup of turmeric milk. Sounds weird, but it really tastes amazing. And it's the perfect drink when you're feeling under the weather, have an injury, or feel like you're coming down with something.

Turmeric Milk Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1 inch grated fresh ginger (or a ¼ teaspoon dried ginger)
- 2 tsp raw honey
- 1 cup coconut milk
- Cayenne powder pinch (optional)
- ½ to 1 teaspoon turmeric

Directions:

- Warm the milk in a saucepan over medium heat
- Add the remaining ingredients and stir until dissolved
- Pour into cup and enjoy

You can also make turmeric salad dressing, add it to smoothies, or start adding it to your other recipes.

Turmeric is also a superfood that is for everyone. The health benefits are tremendous, and it's a great addition to your diet and lifestyle.



Maca

Maca is a root plant that grows in central Peru. It's also not a new plant. It's been around for 3,000 years. It is actually a cruciferous vegetable like broccoli and cauliflower.

It smells like butterscotch, but looks a bit like a radish. The maca root has a number of interesting health benefits, including:

- Treat anemia
- Treat chronic fatigue syndrome
- Memory enhancement
- Improve athletic performance
- Improve energy and stamina
- Improve fertility
- Reducing symptoms of menopause, hormonal imbalance, and menstrual problems.
- Treat osteoporosis
- Treat digestive issues
- Treat erectile dysfunction
- Immune boosting properties

It also offers a laundry list of vitamins, minerals, and nutrients like fatty acids, fiber, and amino acids – including essential amino acids. It's also quite high in protein.

It's generally easier to find maca root powder than the actual root. However, you may find it at health stores and Whole Foods. It's easiest to consume if you add it to smoothies. You can also find maca root supplements. If you want more energy in your day and you're looking to improve your mental and physical wellbeing, maca root is an easy addition to your daily or weekly routine.

Lucuma

The lucuma is a golden fruit from Peru. It is high in beta carotene, calcium, iron, zinc, vitamin B3, and protein. It has been studied for its anti-inflammatory benefits and has shown to be excellent for both anti-inflammatory and anti-aging properties.

It improves your skin health, balances blood sugar, and the wealth of nutrients, including anti-oxidants make it heart healthy. The lucuma is also low on the glycemic scale, which means it won't spike your blood sugar.

How do you eat it? Well, if you can find it in your supermarket, you can eat it whole. You can peel the skin or eat it unpeeled. It does have a pit, so be careful. You can also find lucuma powder online and in your local health food stores.

What does it taste like? The lucuma is said to have a maple taste. Others say it tastes something like a mild sweet potato. It's great in baked goods. You can add it to a smoothie or make it into ice cream.

Recent research shows that lucuma may be helpful for supporting skin health, blood sugar, and even cardiovascular health.

Cacao Nibs

Cacao nibs are little pieces of raw cacao. They're often roasted, like a coffee bean, and they are more than tasty treats; they're really good for you. Cacao nibs are packed with antioxidants. They have 4x the antioxidant content of dark chocolate, and 20x more than blueberries.

They're high in:

- Sulfur
- Magnesium
- Phenylethylamine
- Flavonoids
- Iron
- Calcium



Cacao nibs offer a wealth of health benefits including:

- Weight loss
- Reduce appetite
- Improved digestion
- Improved muscle and nerve function
- Better heart health
- Improved mood from the anandamide, a fatty acid neurotransmitter, found in nibs

How do you eat cacao nibs? You can eat them raw. Keep in mind they don't taste like chocolate. They have no sugar and are not sweet. They're more like roasted coffee beans. You can grind them up and make hot cocoa with them, add them to soups and stews, or make a cacao smoothie. You can also sprinkle them on a salad or in your morning yogurt or hot cereal.

Who are they for? Anyone who wants an interesting snack that boosts metabolism, protects their heart health, and gives an energy boost and a sense of wellbeing.

Buckwheat

If you follow the Paleo diet or are low carb, then you're probably scratching your head with this next superfood. Buckwheat is a grain, right? And grains are bad, right? Actually, buckwheat is the seed of a broadleaf plant in the same family as rhubarb. It's not really a grain at all.



And buckwheat isn't high on the glycemic scale like other grains. It is high in protein and is gluten free. Buckwheat has been shown to lower blood pressure, improve the good cholesterol in your body, and regulate blood sugar. It is high in vitamins and mineral, with a good amount of zinc, copper and manganese.

It actually strengthens your cardiovascular system, has good healthy fats, and improves digestion colon health.

How do you eat buckwheat? Buckwheat comes in many forms. You can have it as a hot cereal in the morning. This is actually a great way to start the day. A bowl of hot buckwheat and some fresh berries are a delicious and healthy meal.

You can also have soba noodles, Chinese pasta made from buckwheat. Or you can enjoy them as a side dish with sautéed vegetables, onions, and seasoned to taste. Buckwheat also makes a good flour that can be used to make baked goods like muffins and waffles.

Here's a recipe for a cold buckwheat salad.

Ingredients

- 1 cup buckwheat groats
- 2 cups water
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ chayote, finely diced
- 10 large green olives, pitted and quartered
- 1 small yellow capsicum pepper, diced
- 1 cup broccoli florets, chopped
- ¼ cup red onion, finely chopped
- ½ cup fresh dill, chopped
- 2 Tbsp. fresh mint, chopped
- juice of 1 lime
- 2 Tbsp. white wine vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

- Cook groats by brining water to boil. Add buckwheat and cook for 10 minutes. Remove from heat and cool.
- While buckwheat is cooling, chop your herbs and vegetables.
- Toss everything in a large bowl, mix and enjoy.

Watermelon Seeds

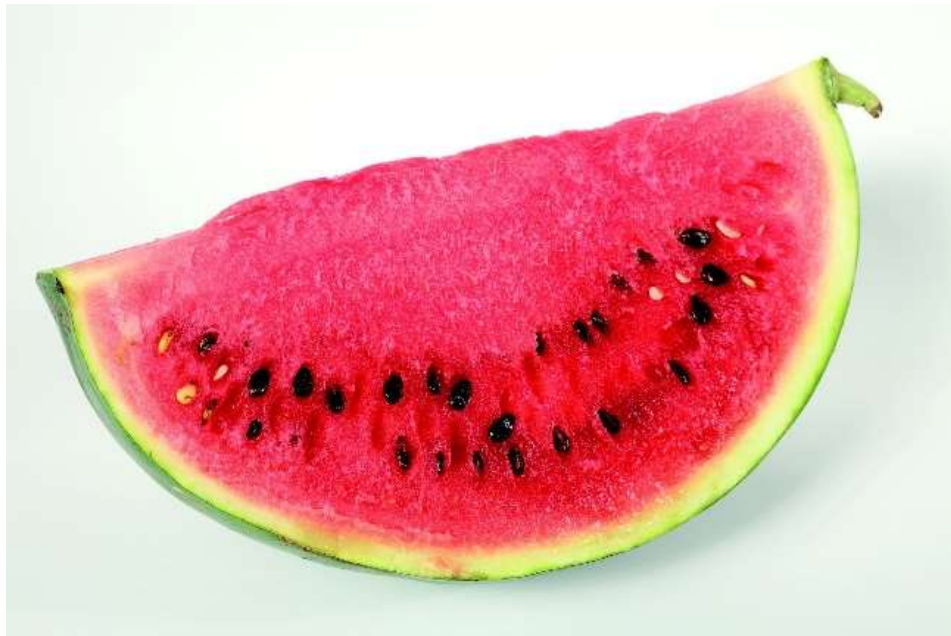
Generally, when you eat watermelon, you spit out the seeds, right? Well, guess what? Now people are eating them. Like seeds in general (think about sunflower seeds, quinoa, and sesame seeds), watermelon seeds are:

- High in fiber
- High in healthy fats
- Great sources of amino acids (the building blocks of protein)
- High in minerals like magnesium and zinc
- Good sources of iron and B vitamins

Watermelon seeds are good for your kidney health, your digestion, muscle repair, and for boosting your immunity. They're even high in lycopene and have anti-aging properties. And they taste great too.

How do you eat watermelon seeds? They are a filling snack and can be sprinkled on salads and yogurt. You can find watermelon seed butters in your health food stores and supermarkets. Like pumpkin seeds, if you have the whole seed you'll want to shell them and roast them for a tasty crunch.

Who are they for? Watermelon seeds are for anyone who wants to add nutrients to their day. If you're looking to lose weight or boost your vitamin and mineral intake, this is an easy superfood to add into your diet.



Chaga Mushrooms

The chaga mushroom is a fungus that grows on birch trees. Sounds yummy, right? Well, it's also known as the king of medicinal mushrooms, and has a history of being used to treat a variety of ailments.

Most notably, the chaga mushroom is known for its immune boosting properties. It is high in a nutrient called Beta-D-Glucans, and works to activate your immune cells that are responsible for battling cancer cells. It also has antimicrobial tendencies.

Beyond improving and strengthening your immune system, the chaga mushroom has nutrients that support a strong cardiovascular system and circulatory system. It repairs damage to your arteries and tissues. It promotes good digestive health and is rich in antioxidants.

How do you add chaga to your daily diet? There are actually a few ways that you can consume chaga mushrooms. You can use chaga powder and make tea. Or you can take a capsuled supplement.

You can also add the powder to your smoothies, sauces, or stews. It is said to taste a little bit like burnt tree bark with a bit of sweetness. And while that sounds odd, many people really enjoy the taste. Of course, you can add honey to your tea to sweeten it.



If these 10 superfoods aren't enough for you, check out these additional seven.

1. Moringa
2. Nut Oils
3. Super Salts like Himalayan rock salt
4. Black Currant Supplements
5. Algae Fats
6. Purple Food like purple cauliflower
7. Tiger nuts

There are great things happening right now in health and wellness. Food scientists, nutritionists, and researchers are really taking a deeper look at how food heals the body. Add these seven to your list of superfoods to investigate and start improving your health in a fun and delicious way.

Before we wrap it up, you may be feeling a bit overwhelmed by so many different foods. We've created a short tip list to help you include these foods into your diet and to help you create a strong and healthy foundation for weight loss, more energy, and better health.



7 Tips to Include More Superfoods into Your Diet

Try One New Superfood Each Week

There are a number of superfoods on this list, and trying them all may feel overwhelming. Create a plan and make it a mission to try one new superfood each week. Some of these foods may be tricky to find, so you can explore your community and learn about some new stores and markets. Start with the superfood you're most interested in trying and add it to your meals this week.

Try with a Friend

Try some of these new superfoods with a friend. For example, you might buy some maca root powder and split it with them. You'll save money on the item (just in case it's not for you), and you'll be able to share your experiences with one another. It's fun to try new things, and even better when you do it with a friend.

Make Your Food at Home

Including superfoods into your daily diet can be tricky if you are always on the go. If you eat out often or take advantage of delivery, it's tough. You can, however, integrate more superfoods into your diet, and eat healthier, if you make more meals at home. And you can really control the ingredients.

For example, make your own ketchup instead of buying it. Make your own almond milk or nut butters. Grinding up almonds to make almond butter can be taken to the next level when you add a bit of honey and cacao nibs to it. Chocolate almond butter, yum!

Sneak Them into Your Meal

Many of these superfoods, and superfoods from the past, work quite well as side dishes. They don't have to be your meal; they can be a side dish or seasoning. For example, the cold buckwheat groat salad recipe makes a great side dish. And turmeric can be added to a number of savory sauces and spice mixes.

Keep Eating the Other Foods That You Know Are Good for You

Superfoods are great. But they're not a cure all. You also want to make sure that your general diet is healthy. Focus on eating whole foods; foods that are not processed and are in their most natural form.

A healthy whole foods diet gives your body the foundation that it needs to function optimally. You can then add superfoods into your diet to not only increase your results, but to also take your health and wellbeing to the next level.

Use superfoods as a booster, rather than a way to recover from damage incurred by your other eating habits.

Keep the Superfoods That You Enjoy and Experiment with Them

You're not going to enjoy every superfood on this list. You might find, for example, that watermelon seeds just don't taste good to you. That's okay. You don't have to eat all of these superfoods. The goal is to find superfoods that you enjoy and to integrate them into your lifestyle.

Pay Attention to How You Feel

Finally, it should always be part of your awareness to pay attention to how foods make you feel. This is how you uncover foods that maybe you're sensitive to, and discover foods that really help improve your health. Consider keeping a food journal. Pay attention to things like your mood, your focus and mental clarity, your skin, your energy levels, and your digestion. These are all valuable signs that a food is working for you or against you.

Conclusion

Eating healthy is about cutting sugar and fueling your body with whole foods. Superfoods can be a part of a healthy diet to help you lose weight, have more energy, and feel great. The 10 superfoods we've listed are a great start to a healthier year and a better you.