

SUPER FOODS

We like “Ten Best ...” lists so here is my pick of ten “super” foods (only organically grown!) on which to base a healthful dietary lifestyle for most individuals.

1 Berries While all whole (not juiced) fruit is healthful in moderation (too much can imbalance the pancreas), most berries are even better. But the finest berries readily available are blueberries, blackberries and cranberries. Blueberries and blackberries are bursting with *anthocyanin*, an antioxidant that reduces free radicals and also gives these berries their color; they register at the top of the *phytonutrient* scale. Add a cup to smoothies or salads. Cranberries are not only a good source of vitamin C, but they also contain generous amounts of *procyanidins* to help support urinary tract health. Add to salads, relishes or sauces. Berries can be fresh, frozen or dried. Traditionally dried berries were ground with seeds/nuts and tallow was poured over them to make the original “power bar;” of course the combination of fat and fruit was ideal in terms of digestibility of both!

Another phenomenally powerful berry is the Tibetan Gogi berry, available at a few health food stores or on the web, as are labor-intensive but precious pomegranate “berries” which are actually their seeds. Not a berry but an extremely nutritious small fruit is the blue-black concord grape, a good source of potassium, vitamin C, *flavonoids* and *anthocyanidins*, which support the health of blood vessels. They seem to be exceptionally helpful for those with arthritis. Fresh or dried into raisins, they can be tossed into salads, smoothies, or eaten out of hand, along with nuts/seeds as a snack.

2 Coconut According to massive research [WWW.WESTONAPRICE.ORG], coconuts can actually 1) help you lose weight by reducing white fat stores, or maintain your already good weight; 2) reduce the risk of heart disease; 3) lower your cholesterol; 4) improve conditions in those with diabetes and chronic fatigue; 5) improve Crohn’s, IBS, and other digestive disorders; 6) prevent other disease and routine illness with its antibacterial, antiviral and antifungal agents; 7) increase metabolism and promote healthy thyroid function; 8) boost

daily energy and 10) provide, along with ghee (clarified butter) and animal tallows, a stable, high heat cooking fat. According to Mary Enig, PhD, [WWW.WESTONAPRICE.ORG] approximately 50% of coconut fat is *Lauric acid*, which forms into *monolaurin* in the human or animal body. *Monolaurin* is used by mammals to destroy lipid-coated viruses such as HIV, *herpes*, *cytomegalovirus*, *influenza*, various pathogenic bacteria, including *listeria monocytogenes* and *helicobacter pylori*, and protozoa such as *giardia lamblia*. Additionally, bad side-effects from high omega-6 oils (all standard vegetable oils) tend to be normalized by the consumption of coconut oil.

Adding delicious shredded coconut to fruit slows down fruit’s effects on the pancreas, but the oil is also perfect for cooking Thai food or curries. Also excellent on vegetables or greens in a dressing or sauce as the fat increases vegetable mineral absorption.

3 Dairy Raw, whole, range-free dairy is a far cry from modern agri-business dairy with its forced grain-feeding, antibiotics, hormones, pesticides, space restriction, pasteurization and homogenization. Even individuals with “lactose intolerance” can almost inevitably digest *real* dairy which for thousands of years has proved an excellent animal protein base for innumerable individuals. All dairy, in addition to being completely raw for its enzyme value, should be whole rather than skimmed. Homogenization turns normally beneficial fats into indigestible globules. Dairy fats (butter/cheese) contain vital fat-soluble vitamins such as A, D & E which are far higher in free-range cows. These vitamins allow for the utilization of minerals; this in turn alkalizes the protein keeping it from becoming mucous forming. Raw milk from free-range cows also contains over 500% more CLA (*conjugated linoleic acid*—an essential fatty acid which helps build lean muscle, lose fat and boost the immune system) than restricted cows. It also contains the heart-healthy ratio of 4:1 Omega 6 to 3 fatty acids, shared by range-free eggs and meat. An over-

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abundance of Omega 6-rich vegetable oils has resulted in modern ratios of 20-25:1.

Unfortunately, many states, CO included, prohibit the public selling of raw milk, so co-ops have been formed wherein an individual buys a “cow share.” Some enterprising owners simply share their dairy largesse on a very quiet and private basis. For more information on the value of raw dairy, including some sources, see WWW.REALMILK.COM. For nationwide shipping visit WWW.GREENPASTURES.COM, for milk, cream and even *colostrum*, and WWW.MERCOLA.COM/FORMS/CHEESE.HTM for cheese.

Another way to consume vitamin/ mineral-rich dairy is to culture it which eliminates almost all the lactose. Fermented cheeses kept the nutrient goodness of dairy available even in long, cold winters, while fermented milks, essentially pro-biotic cultures, were eaten as a matter of course in various societies which were extremely long-lived. Yogurt is a familiar item to all today, but unless it is from raw whole dairy with no added sweets, it will not be close in value to a true culture. Original buttermilk, sour cream, and crème fraîche were all forms of cultured milk.

Kefir liquid culture is especially beneficial for children, pregnant & nursing women, the elderly and the health compromised. It not only colonizes the intestinal tract, our first line of disease defense, with a host of beneficial bacteria, but it also supplies the necessary environment for the long-term health of the bacterial colonies. The culturing process essentially digests most of the protein freeing an abundance of *tryptophan*, the ‘relaxing’ amino acid. It is also high in numerous minerals including phosphorus, is rich in Vitamin B₁₂, B₁, Vitamin K, and is an excellent source of *biotin*. It makes a terrific “smoothie” for breakfast, anytime beverage, and kefir “grains” can also be used to make sour cream or even sauerkraut. The most informative kefir site I found is [HTTP://USERS.CHARIOT.NET.AU/~DNA/KEFIRPAGE.HTML#EAT-KG], Dom’s Kefir In-Site. Body Ecology Kefir [WWW.KEFIR.NET/800-511-2660] is recommended by Dr. Joseph Mercola [WWW.MERCOLA.COM]

4 Eggs Long considered “nature’s most perfect food,” eggs fell out favor for far too long due to the now-exploded cholesterol myth [WWW.RAVENSKOV.NU]. In reality, raw eggs have been used by almost all cultures for thousands of years not

only as a generally excellent food, but also as a healing food for debilitated individuals. All eggs were traditionally “free-range” rather than the modern agri-business variety of thin-shelled, watery whites, loose light-colored yolks, grown with antibiotics, pesticides, and forced grains which skew EFA balances. Good free-range eggs on the other hand have thick uncracked shells, a gel-like white, a round dark yellow yolk, and obviously no odor whatsoever. The yolks contain a wealth of B vitamins (B₂, B₁₂, Niacin, Folic Acid & the highest source *choline*); Vits A & D; essential fatty acids with the correct Omega 3:6 ratio; valuable *carotenoids* including *lutein* and *zeaxanthin*; vital enzymes including CoQ10 and the selenium is vital for iodine absorption..

Since cooking compromises the protein which then can cause allergic reactions in sensitive individuals, egg yolks are best eaten raw mixed into a glass of vegetable juice, a morning smoothie, a cup of soup, or even into a salad dressing; they have no taste if eaten this way. Raw egg whites contain *avidin* which inhibits *biotin* absorption and so should not be eaten raw regularly. As for salmonella dangers, according to a recent study by the United States Department of Agriculture, only one in every 30,000 [agri-business] eggs is contaminated with salmonella. The healthier the bird and its environment and feed, the less risk there is of salmonella contamination. According to Dr. Joseph Mercola [WWW.MERCOLA.COM], adults can eat up to 3-4 raw yolks per day.

J Fermented vegetables One of the best ways of keeping a healthy intestinal tract is to eat traditionally fermented vegetables with a focus on the *glutathione*-rich (aids in mineral transference & slows DNA breakdown) cruciferous. All varieties of cabbage, including broccoli (rich in cancer-fighting *indole-3-carbinol*), cauliflower and kale are the most often fermented whether as Korean *Kim Chee*, Germanic *Sauerkraut*, Mexican *Cortido* or Japanese *Tsukemono*. Frequently other vegetables such as onions, garlic, carrots, peppers, beets, etc. (any of which can also be pickled alone like cucumbers), are added along with various seasonings. Sometimes fruits are fermented as well; check out some imported olives, plum sauce, and chutneys. Fermentation allows soy products, normally inimical to human digestion, to be eaten in

the healthful forms of *tempeh*, *miso*, *natto*, *hoisin* & *soy sauce*.

Historically, easily stored fermented products have been used as a superior source of Vit C during long winter months, for travelers/seamen, as a baby food, and as a general source of health and longevity. During the Civil War, according to Linda Forristal [WWW.MOTHERLINDAS.COM], “*some enlightened doctors fed sauerkraut to prisoners of war, reducing the death rate from smallpox from 90 percent to 5 percent.*” Modern studies confirm that fermentation can impede cancerous growths, reduce sweet cravings, promote alkalinity and intestinal cleanliness/effectiveness, reduce osteoporosis, aid pregnant/nursing mothers, control the spread of viruses/pathogenic yeasts/intestinal parasites and even e-coli which seems to be so endemic today due to loss of intestinal health.

For more on this, and how-to directions, read Sally Fallon’s WILD FERMENTATION: THE FLAVOR, NUTRITION, AND CRAFT OF LIVE-CULTURE FOODS. Kefir can also be used to ferment veggies salt-free.

6 Fruits Tomatoes and avocados are botanically regarded as fruits. Fresh-from-the-vine tomatoes are a sublime treat as are tree-ripened avocados. Tomatoes contain an abundance of *lycopen* which not only gives tomatoes their red color but is a great immune system and prostate health booster. Interestingly, cooking tomatoes can actually increase *lycopen* uptake meaning that organic canned tomato products are acceptable! Perhaps fermenting them in relishes has a similar effect.

An ancient fruit originally developed in Mexico, avocados are another source of vegetable fats while containing more than twice as much potassium as a banana. A Japanese study has shown they can actually protect the liver from damage, and David Heber, M.D., Director, UCLA Center for Human Nutrition says that avocados act as a nutrient booster, allowing the body to significantly absorb more heart-healthy and cancer-fighting nutrients like *alpha-carotene*, *beta-carotene* and *lycopen* found in other fruits and vegetables. Is it any wonder that avocados are found together in so many recipes along with tomatoes and citrus fruit?

Citrus fruits have long been a juice favorite, but juicing deprives the consumer of the valuable white part of citrus which holds essential *bioflavonoids*, a valuable Vitamin C cofactor. Generally

speaking, smaller darker oranges such as blood oranges or clementines are closer to their antecedents than over-large modern hybrids and are more easily digested by many. Readily available year round, lemons and limes act as preservatives, flavor/nutrient enhancers, and alkalizers in food preparation.

7 Greens Spinach, kale, romaine lettuce, dandelion greens, romaine lettuce, parsley, Swiss chard and other dark, leafy greens, all contain *beta carotene* and the *carotenoids lutein & zeaxanthin* as well as being an excellent source of *chlorophyll* (a blood cleanser, alkalizer and immune booster), vitamin B and numerous minerals. Due to their *oxalate* content, dark leafy greens should only be eaten raw when very young and tender. Older greens have traditionally been steamed, simmered in soups or marinated. Adding fats, such as butter, coconut oil or a cream sauce actually increases mineral availability, hence French creamed spinach or Indian spinach *paneer* (cheese).

8 Orange & Green Vegetables Vibrant orange vegetables, such as pumpkins, butter-nut squash, carrots and sweet potatoes, although high in starch (carbohydrates), also contain high levels of *beta-carotene*, the Vitamin A antioxidant precursor so fabulous for eye health. As with *lycopen*, the *beta-carotene* in these actually becomes more bio-available when cooked; roasting these vegetables is a favorite way to eat them. Carotene is most easily converted into Vit A when bile salts, stimulated by fat consumption, are present. In other words, butter your orange vegetables!

While all dark green vegetables are excellent, the ones highest in antioxidants are beans and artichokes. Artichokes and asparagus are both superior diuretics with asparagus also containing an appreciable amount of iodine. Steam and serve with butter for complete nutrient utilization.

9 Peppers From the popular Bells (0 Scoville Units), through Anaheims, Anchos, Poblanos & Pasillas (500-2500 SU) to Cayenne & Tobasco (30-50,000 SU) and on up to the world’s hottest chili, the tiny Red Savina Habanero (over 577,000 SU), all peppers are rich in Vit A & B, six times more C, *bioflavonoids*, and *carotenoids* than oranges, plus calcium & potassium and cholesterol-lowering properties. Allowing them to reach

their ripe, red color, however increases their Vit A and *lycopene* content considerably. Beyond that, they also have been used herbally as digestive and circulatory aids. It is their *capsaicin* (*capsicum*) content levels which provide the healing and determine the heat. Peppers also act as catalysts for other nutrients making them great additions to numerous dishes.

10 Seeds & Nuts The best source of *lig-nans*, a *phytoestrogen* containing anti-viral, anti-fungal, anti-bacterial and anti-cancer properties, seeds like pumpkin and sunflower can have a balancing effect on hormones. They also exhibit strong antioxidant activity and are full of protein, iron, phosphorus and vitamin E. Virtually all seeds and nuts are superior sources of *magnesium*, vital for muscular health, and *boron*, necessary for brain function. Because of *enzyme inhibitors*, and *phytates* in the outer layers, seeds & nuts require soaking 7-8 hrs. before draining, drying, grinding, toasting or sprouting; the latter increases nutrient values considerably. Almonds are the only alkaline nuts, while pecans, walnuts and hazelnuts are the highest in antioxidants. Walnuts contain the best Omega ratio; all other nuts are top-heavy in Omega 6 which means that eaten in excess, they can distort the ideal Omega 3 to Omega 6 ratio.

Although exceptionally popular and praised for its Omega 3 fatty acid content, the wisdom of eating flax seeds or oil is questionable: flax is classed as a *goiterogenic* (thyroid inhibitor) plant and can apparently increase the incidence of prostate cancer which is not so good! Nor does it contain Omega 3 fatty acid (no plant source does).

As a side note, peanuts are NOT nuts but legumes, are some of the most highly chemically sprayed farm items (rice, sugar beets and cotton are the others), and are very prone to the fungus *aflatoxin*. Almond or cashew butter are far healthier.

Honorable Mention . . .

Onions & Garlic These members of the lily family “allium” have remarkable healing powers. Garlic has long been known as a natural anti-biotic while onion poultices have been used successfully as poultices not only on congested chests but also on wounds, even diabetic, gangreneous ones. But

red and yellow onions, with their *quercetin* (a bio-flavanoid), also have another ability: they can actually increase absorption of calcium which is quite a boon in this osteoporosis-ridden modern world!

In 1999, male rats fed 1 gram of onion powder per day for a period of only four weeks increased the mineral content of their bones by over 17%, the thickness increased by over 13% and the mineral density increased by over 13%. Overall, the addition of just onion powder inhibited bone re-absorption by about 20%; more effective than the prescription drug Calcitonin. In female rats that had their ovaries removed, the addition of 30-1,500 mg of dried onion daily prevented bone loss that would have occurred when estrogen levels normally decrease. Analogous studies have not been made with humans.

Quercetin is highest in the paper-like skin which is inedible. However, it can be thrown into soups and stews and removed before consumption rather like a bay leaf.

Many people however, find the *allium* family indigestible, even cooked, and so should avoid them for that reason. Perhaps onion or garlic powder capsules may serve for such individuals. Also Eastern thought has long viewed them as “excitatory” and contra-indicated when attempting long periods of meditation. Lastly, their sulfur content, while beneficial in many ways, can be overwhelming in others. But if you and the *alliums* can co-exist, they can be a superb dietary super-food!

Mushrooms Some people cannot tolerate mushrooms at all while for others they are absolute no-no's. Many vegetarians utilize them, especially the large Portobello mushrooms, meat substitutes and certainly some, such as truffles, are considered to be far more valuable than gold! Some mushrooms are herbally “super-foods” (ie: *maitake*-high in *polysaccharides* & *reishi*-high in *interleukin*), and others are simply used as traditional vegetables.

However, according to Dave Holland, MD & Doug Kaufmann, THE FUNGUS LINK, mushrooms can also harbor dangerous *mycotoxins* neutralized only by fermenting.

IF A PERSON'S DIET consisted of a preponderance of these “super foods” in accordance with their metabolic types, I am convinced that vastly better health would be the welcome result. ■