



# Healing Foods

## Figs

### FRESH

A great source of potassium, which helps regulate heart rate and reduce blood pressure

### DRIED

The dried fruit also contains pectin, which helps reduce blood sugar



**Eat your way to a healthier life**



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**Eat your way to a healthier life**







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## KEY TO ICONS

These icons are used throughout to signpost you to dietary benefits for different health areas.

 HEART AND CIRCULATION	 ENERGY BOOST
 DIGESTION	 MUSCLES AND JOINTS
 URINARY	 SKIN AND HAIR
 RESPIRATORY	 MIND AND EMOTIONS
 DETOX	 EYE HEALTH
 METABOLIC BALANCE	 MEN'S HEALTH
 IMMUNE SUPPORT	 WOMEN'S HEALTH

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Susan Curtis** has practiced as a homoeopath and naturopath since the mid-1980s and is the Director for Natural Health for Neal's Yard Remedies. She is the author of several books, including *Essential Oils*, and co-author of *Natural Healing for Women*. Susan has two grown-up children and is passionate about helping people to eat well and live a more natural and healthy lifestyle.

**Pat Thomas** is a journalist, campaigner, broadcaster, and passionate cook. She is the author of several books on health and environment, and has worked with leading campaign organizations to outline sensible strategies for healthy and sustainable eating. She is a former editor of *The Ecologist* magazine and was the director of Paul McCartney's "Meat Free Monday" campaign in the UK. She currently sits on the Council of Trustees of the Soil Association—the UK's premier organic certification body—and is the editor of Neal's Yard Remedies' natural health website, *NYR Natural News*.

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# INTRODUCTION

“LET FOOD BE THY MEDICINE  
AND MEDICINE BE THY FOOD”

HIPPOCRATES

THE FOOD WE EAT HAS AN OVERREACHING EFFECT ON OUR HEALTH AND **WELL-BEING**, WHETHER WE ARE CONSCIOUS OF IT OR NOT. BECOMING MORE AWARE OF YOUR DIET AND THE **HEALING PROPERTIES** OF FOOD WILL HELP YOU TO MAKE NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF **YOUR BODY**—AND IT WILL DO AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT TO MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE YOUR **HEALTH**.



# THE PROTECTIVE POWER OF FOOD







Nutritional science has shed much light on the importance of “whole food”: we now understand that nutrients in our food work synergistically to promote health—and that processed food, denuded of many of its intrinsic nutrients, can promote disease. We also know of 50 or so essential vitamins, amino acids, minerals, and essential fatty acids that we need to get on a regular basis from our diet, and more than 1,200 phytonutrients found in fruits, vegetables, beans, grains, and animal products.

## A RAINBOW OF PHYTONUTRIENTS

Phytonutrients are the bioactive compounds in plants (“phyto” means plant) that supply their color and flavor. Although not essential to life in the way that vitamins and minerals are, they support health in a variety of ways.

Antioxidants, for example, protect the body from free radicals, the unstable molecules that are produced through metabolism of and exposure to pollution, and which cause disease by damaging vital tissues and organs.

### Antioxidants by color

COLOR	PHYTONUTRIENT	BENEFITS	FOUND IN
	<b>Green</b>		
	<b>Lutein</b>	Protects eyes; boosts immunity; and supports healthy tissues, skin, and blood	Kale, collard greens, cucumber, zucchini, peas, avocado, asparagus, green beans
	<b>Chlorophyll</b>	Detoxifying; helps build red blood cells and collagen; boosts energy and well-being	All leafy green vegetables, sprouted grasses, and microalgae
	<b>Indoles</b>	Has anticancer properties; supports healthy hormone balance	Brussels sprouts, broccoli, bok choy, cabbage, and turnips
	<b>Orange/yellow</b>		
	<b>Carotenes</b> (incl. alpha-, beta-, and delta-carotene)	Source of vitamin A; has anticancer and heart-protective properties; protects mucous membranes	Orange and yellow fruits and vegetables (peppers, squashes, carrots, apricots, mangoes, oranges, grapefruit)
	<b>Xanthophylls</b> (incl. zeaxanthin and astaxanthin)	Source of vitamin A; has anticancer properties; protects eyes and brain; strengthens the immune system	Red fish (e.g. salmon), eggs, most orange and yellow fruits and vegetables
	<b>Red</b>		
	<b>Lycopene</b>	Protects against heart disease, cancer (especially prostate), and vision loss	Fresh and cooked tomatoes, watermelon, goji berries, papaya, and rosehips
	<b>Anthocyanins</b>	Can help reduce the risk of heart disease, cancer, and neurodegenerative diseases	Cranberries, strawberries, raspberries, cherries, and red cabbage
	<b>Blue/purple</b>		
	<b>Anthocyanins</b>	Fights free radicals; has anticancer properties; supports healthy aging	Blueberries, eggplant, grapes, grape juice, raisins, and red wine
	<b>Resveratrol</b>	Has anticancer properties; helps balance hormone levels	Grapes, grape juice, red wine, mulberries, and cocoa
	<b>White</b>		
	<b>Allyl sulfides</b>	Boosts immunity; has anticancer and anti-inflammatory properties	Onions, garlic, scallions, and chives
	<b>Anthoxanthins</b>	Helps lower cholesterol and blood pressure; helps reduce the risk of certain cancers and heart disease	Bananas, cauliflower, mushrooms, onions, parsnips, potatoes, garlic, ginger, and turnips

# DIFFERENT DIETARY PATTERNS

While we would not advocate a rigid approach to a particular diet, there are things that can be gained and adopted from traditional diets. Humans are very adaptable and it is interesting to see the ways in which different cultures have adjusted their diets to remain healthy in widely different environments.

## TRADITIONAL DIETS

### INUIT

The Inuit people of the Arctic have traditionally had very little access to cereals or fresh fruit and vegetables, but the manner in which they hunt and eat their mostly fish- and meat-based diet meets their nutritional needs. For example, vitamins and minerals that are derived from plant sources in other areas of the world are also present in most Inuit diets: vitamins A and D are present in the oils and livers of coldwater fishes and mammals, for instance, while vitamin C is obtained through sources such as caribou liver, kelp, whale skin, and seal offal. Because these foods are typically eaten raw or frozen, the vitamin C they contain—which would be destroyed by cooking—is instead preserved.

### MEDITERRANEAN

Another traditional diet that has received publicity in recent years is the Mediterranean diet. This diet is based mainly on fresh vegetables and fruit with some whole grains, healthier oils like olive oil and those from fresh fish, red wine, and smaller quantities of meat. Studies throughout the world have shown that following a strict Mediterranean diet offers substantial protection against heart disease, cancer, and Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases. The biggest study into this diet has shown that it can reduce the number of deaths from these diseases; it also found that people who follow this diet show significant improvements in health, and are nine percent less likely to die young.

### JAPANESE

Traditional Japanese cuisine is rich in fat-soluble vitamins from seafood and organ meats and minerals from fish broth, and contains plenty of beneficial lactofermented foods, such as tempeh and miso. Although portions tend to be relatively small, they are both filling and very nutrient-dense. In fact, Japanese people who follow this traditional diet tend to be some of the healthiest, least obese, and longest-lived people in the world.

### ANCESTRAL/PALEOLITHIC

Also referred to as the caveman or hunter-gatherer diet, this modern nutritional plan is based on an ancient diet of wild plants and meat that early humans were likely to have habitually eaten during the Paleolithic era—a period of about 2.5 million years that ended around 10,000 years ago with the development of agriculture. Early humans were foragers who would have grazed opportunistically on seasonally available plants and not made the, often arbitrary, distinctions we do between weeds and crops and medicinal and culinary herbs. Although the hunter-gatherer diet comprises commonly available modern foods—mainly fish, grass-fed, pasture-raised meats, vegetables, fruit, fungi, roots, and nuts—it largely excludes dried beans, dairy products, grains, salt, refined sugar, and processed oils, which define the Western diet (overleaf). Studies of the Paleolithic diet in humans have shown improved health and fewer incidences of diseases, such as diabetes, cancer, obesity, dementia, and heart disease.



WHAT MANY OF THESE DIETS have in common is that they are plant-based, with meat reserved for feast days and occasional treats. They include plenty of oily fish so are rich in the omega-3 fatty acid DHA. Their overall balance of essential fatty acids is healthier (i.e. higher in omega 3 than 6, unlike modern diets),

and they are high in antioxidants. People who follow these diets rely on seasonal fresh food produced without industrial chemicals, which means they eat a wide variety of nutrient-dense foods necessary for optimal health throughout the year. They tend to eat sensible portions and rarely “snack” between meals.



## THE WESTERN DIET

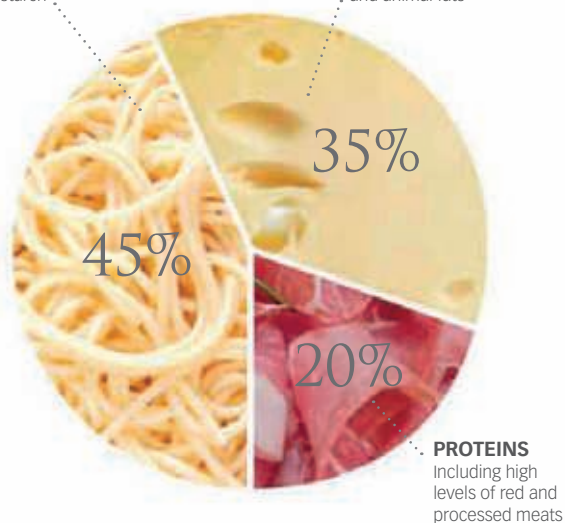
By contrast, the modern Western diet, also called the Western pattern diet, is characterized by high intakes of red meat, sugar and artificial sweeteners, high-fat foods, salt, and refined grains. It also typically contains hydrogenated and trans fats, high-sugar drinks, and higher intakes of processed meat. This diet, based on studies of western populations, is associated with an elevated incidence of obesity, death from heart disease, cancer (especially colon cancer), and other western-pattern diet-related diseases. The high consumption of grains—as breakfast cereals, breads, cakes, cookies, pasta, and so on—means that grain has become a significant source of carbohydrate-energy, minerals, and, in the case of whole grains, of fiber and B vitamins. However, it is now thought that this reliance on cereals may come at a high cost to our health. Modern strains of high-gluten cereals, combined with an over-reliance on wheat-based products and an industrial approach to the processing of grain-based foods, can place a strain on our digestive systems and nutrient balance. For example, an increasing number of people have developed gluten intolerance, or gluten sensitivity, which can vary from celiac disease to feeling bloated if they eat too many cereal-based foods in

### CARBOHYDRATES

Including refined grains and starch

### FATS

Including polyunsaturated and animal fats



### WESTERN DIET FIGURES

In a Western diet, the main nutritional building blocks of fats, carbohydrates, and protein are often processed, nutrient-poor foods high in sugar, refined grains, and saturated fats.

a day. Cereals contain what have been termed “antinutrients,” which may prevent the digestive system from absorbing several essential nutrients. The most researched antinutrients are the phytates found in the bran or outer hull of most grains, and which is part of a seed’s system of preservation—it prevents the seed from sprouting until conditions are right. The phytate known as phytic acid can block the absorption of essential minerals such as calcium, magnesium, copper, iron, and especially zinc, in the gut. This may be why a diet high in improperly prepared whole grains may lead to serious mineral deficiencies and bone loss, and why consuming

large amounts of unprocessed bran often initially improves bowel regularity, but may lead to irritable bowel syndrome and, in the long term, other adverse effects.

So although cereals can be a useful part of a diet, they do require careful

preparation because of their antinutrient properties. Many cultures throughout the world have developed ways of preparing types of grain for human consumption. Soaking, sprouting, and souring are very common aids for grain preparation, and ensure the neutralization of phytates, enzyme-inhibitors, and other antinutrients with which seeds are naturally endowed. Some traditional preparation methods involve complex, comparatively labor-intensive steps that produce what are now considered unusual foods from common grains, but which were once part of common dietary practices. The traditional sourdough method of preparing rye bread, for example, once widespread throughout eastern Europe, helps to make rye flour far more digestible.

Modern diets in general also tend to include a larger number of dried beans, and, more recently, soy derivatives. Although including beans in your diet can be a useful source of fiber and protein, these foods also contain phytates. The phytate in soybeans, for example, means they are low in calcium and one reason why they are less healthy than you might think, though fermenting helps to make soy a more nutritious food. It is interesting to note that the traditional Japanese diet includes a lot of soy, but it is usually fermented in the form of tempeh or miso. In addition, Japanese preparation techniques eliminate most of the antinutrients in other dried beans and in grains. Soymilk is not fermented and so can be a cause of digestive problems and calcium depletion, as well as being a fairly potent phytoestrogen—potentially useful for reducing hot flashes in menopausal women, but not so suitable for children or everyone else.

“IT IS NOW THOUGHT THAT RELIANCE ON CEREALS MAY COME AT A HIGH COST TO OUR HEALTH.”

# VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE

The good news is that if you currently eat a modern Western diet, you can easily adapt your eating habits to dramatically improve your health. Including a variety of nutrient-rich, low-energy foods, such as vegetables and fruit, in your diet both helps with weight control and can have a positive effect on your health. Eating a varied diet ensures we get a steady supply of highly bioavailable nutrients that help reduce the likelihood of conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, dementia, anxiety, depression, arthritis, some types of cancer (including breast and bowel cancer), and heart and circulatory disease.

## DIETARY DIVERSITY

No single food or food group can supply all the nutrients we need, which is why a diverse diet is so important. Research consistently shows that dietary diversity protects against the onset of type 2 diabetes, for example, by balancing out blood sugar levels and protecting against blood vessel damage. A varied, seasonal diet rich in plant foods can also lower your total risk of cancer and has been shown to protect against some very specific cancers of the digestive tract. To improve the balance and variety of your diet, choose foods like multigrain breads and granola that have variety "built in," and eat side dishes and condiments, such as fruit and vegetable

salads, sprouted seeds, fresh salsas, pickles, and chutneys. Stir-fries, casseroles, and soups with many ingredients are another easy way to increase diversity in your diet. Or, when grocery shopping, regularly buy a fruit or vegetable that is not familiar to you to prepare and eat. Following a varied diet also tends to be more satisfying and so reduces your sugar, salt, and saturated fat consumption—all risk factors for heart disease. Including more spices and herbs in your food can also boost its flavor and nutritional density: adding a handful of chopped fresh herbs to lettuce in a salad, for example, can add up to 75 percent extra antioxidants to the food.

## Vary your diet

### TYPICAL DIET

#### BREAKFAST

Wheat bran cereal with milk, sugar and banana; orange juice; tea with milk

#### LUNCH

Wheat bread, ham, cheese, and lettuce sandwich with mayonnaise for spread; a piece of fruit

#### DINNER

Chicken (or other meat) served with a vegetable and rice

#### SNACK

Potato chips

**TOTAL OF 13 FOODS**

### DIVERSE DIET

#### BREAKFAST

Oatmeal made with milk, sprinkled with dried fruit, sunflower and pumpkin seeds, and seasoned with cinnamon and maple syrup; rosehip and hibiscus tea

#### LUNCH

Lentil soup (p212) made with ginger, turmeric, shallots, garlic and chile; served with slice of rye bread (p328) spread with butter; a piece of fruit

#### DINNER

Salmon with dill and tamari sauce (p268) served with an adzuki and mung bean salad (p226) with tomatoes and a mixed citrus and herb dressing

#### SNACK

Multiseed crackers (e.g. wheat, pumpkin seed, flaxseed, poppy seed) spread with Hummus (p196) made with chickpeas, tahini, coriander seeds, paprika

**TOTAL OF 35 FOODS**



Soughdough rye bread p328



Hummus with coriander p196

## AS NATURE INTENDED

The success of traditional diets, such as the Mediterranean and Inuit diets, in sustaining good health and well-being (p11) lies in the fact that they each contain a carefully balanced range of seasonal nutrient-rich foods that are available from local sources. To get the very best from locally grown fresh produce, however, it is worth considering buying organic, because foods that are produced this way contain more of the nutrients that make these seasonal foods so beneficial to our health.

### LOCAL AND SEASONAL

Adjusting your diet with the seasons can mean that, as well as being beneficial for your body's "energies," you will eat more fresh foods that can be locally sourced. Choosing local and seasonal should also encourage you to make healthier choices, and can increase your general feeling of well-being as you become more in tune with the cycles of nature. This doesn't mean that you need to become rigid or obsessive about what you eat and when; some foods, such as avocados or bananas, may simply not grow where you live. It is the principles you base your dietary habits on that is key. The 80:20 rule—eating 80 percent of local, seasonal, unprocessed foods and 20 percent of more exotic foods, or "treats"—is probably a good guideline. When people switch to more local, seasonal food, many find they become more adventurous in their cooking and eating habits. If you unpack a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) box, for example, you may find an unrecognized vegetable or fruit that you have to discover the best way to prepare, and hopefully you will look forward to preparing and eating it again next time it is in season. Or, you may become interested in learning how to preserve them—a more traditional and low-impact way of extending the natural season of foods throughout the year.

### ORGANIC BENEFITS

Organic food is produced using environmentally and animal-friendly farming methods on organic farms. These methods are now legally defined in most countries of the world and any food that is sold as organic must be strictly regulated. Organic farming recognizes the direct connection between our health and how the food we eat is produced. Artificial fertilizers are banned and farmers develop fertile soil by rotating crops and using compost, manure, and clover in order. In contrast, modern intensive agricultural practices have led to the reduction of many minerals and vitamins in the food we eat; official food composition tables in the USA and UK have shown that fruits, vegetables, meat, and dairy products all

contain fewer minerals than they did in the past. As soils become depleted of minerals, such as magnesium and zinc, for example, there is less for plants grown in this soil to draw up, and therefore less for us to absorb. Minerals that are particularly affected by these intensive farming methods are iron, zinc, copper, magnesium, and selenium, and their levels of depletion can be very

“IT IS NOT JUST WHAT  
ORGANIC FOOD CONTAINS,  
IT IS ALSO WHAT IT DOES  
NOT CONTAIN THAT  
IS IMPORTANT.”

significant. An early study in the *Journal of Applied Nutrition* in 1993 reported that organically and conventionally grown apples, potatoes, pears, wheat, and corn in a suburban area of the USA were analyzed and compared for mineral

content. On a per-weight basis, average levels of essential minerals were much higher in the organically grown produce than in the conventionally grown foods. The organic produce was, on average, 63 percent higher in calcium, 78 percent higher in chromium, 73 percent higher in iron, 118 percent higher in magnesium, 178 percent higher in molybdenum, 91 percent higher in phosphorus, 125 percent higher in potassium, and 60 percent higher in zinc. More recent studies have confirmed this finding and interestingly, according to population studies, many people in the western world are becoming increasingly deficient in these same minerals, leading to problems such as anemia, fatigue, subfertility, and poor immunity. Organic farming can help to halt this decline in mineral content. Levels of vitamin C, phenolic acids, and antioxidants also tend to be 60–80 percent higher in organic produce. Just as important from a health point of view is the markedly more benign balance of omega-6 and -3 fatty acids in organic meat and dairy produce as compared to conventionally produced foods.

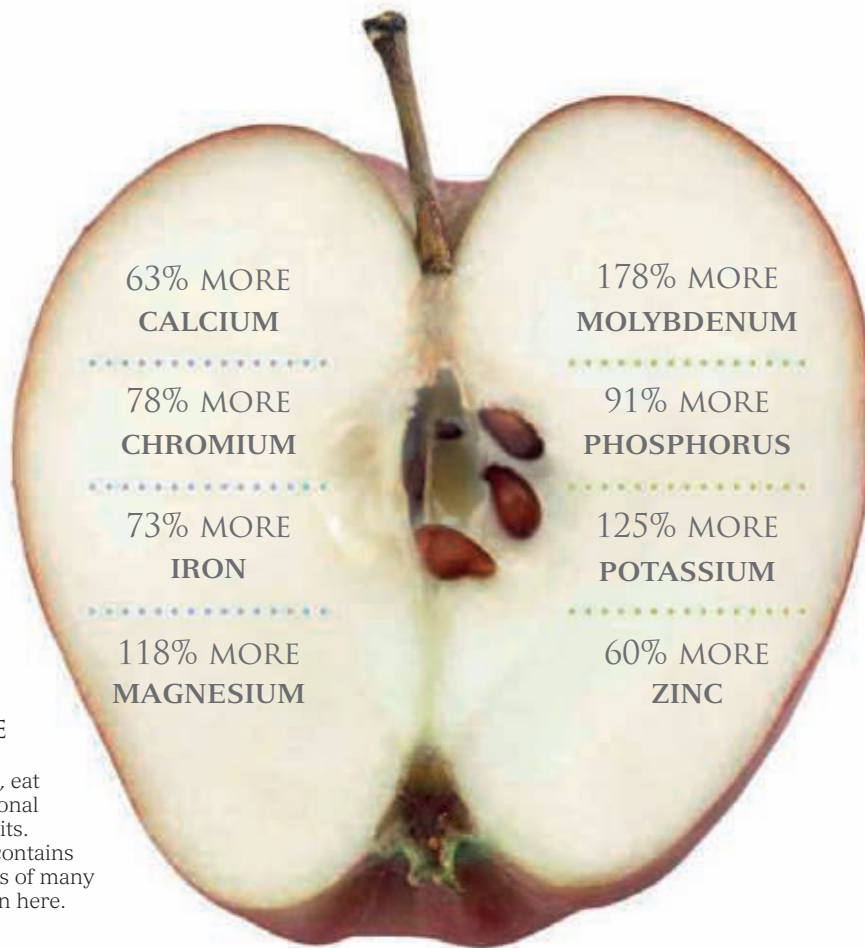
It is not just what organic food contains, it is what it does not contain that is important. Some synthetic chemicals commonly used in nonorganic agriculture are now known to potentially disrupt the nervous, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive systems of humans. This may be even more of a problem in babies and children,

whose organs are developing fast. Although most countries now set safety levels for pesticide residues in food, these are based on individual chemicals, and don't take into account the cocktail effect of several pesticides, which are known to be more damaging in combination. Many food additives common in processed foods are also banned from organic food products; monosodium glutamate (MSG), Brilliant Blue, aspartame, and tartrazine, for example, are now being linked to health issues and behavioral problems in children. Organic standards also insist that animals are given plenty of space and fresh air to thrive and grow, guaranteeing that they are reared humanely and not routinely fed antibiotics to suppress disease or promote growth.

Organic is kinder to the environment, too. Organic farming works with nature, not against it, and research shows that it's better for birds, butterflies, and other wildlife. Organic farms are havens for wildlife and provide homes for bees, birds, and butterflies. In fact, plant, insect, and bird life is up to 50 percent greater on organic farms. Biodiversity is something to encourage both in our environment and on our plate.

## HOW ABOUT GM FOOD?

Genetically modified (GM) crops provide another potential health hazard. GM foods, which have had their genetic material (DNA) altered to achieve desired changes in their characteristics, have been developed by seed and chemical companies as one means of responding to climate change and a growing global population, although GM technologies have consistently underperformed. There is legitimate concern about how carelessly GM foods have been assessed for safety, and evidence that they may have risks to human health and wildlife. In a recent French study in 2012, rats fed a lifelong diet of a bestselling strain of genetically modified corn developed more and bigger breast tumors, and experienced kidney and liver dysfunction. In the USA, GM foods don't have to be labeled, in spite of overwhelming public support for such a requirement in a country where GM-adulterated food is so prevalent. In most countries in Europe, farm animals are fed GM foodstuff, but actual GM foods for human consumption are not yet accepted. Examples of GM foods include soybeans, corn, white rice, tomatoes, and Brazil nuts.



### WHY CHOOSE ORGANIC?

For optimal health, eat fresh organic seasonal vegetables and fruits. Organic produce contains higher percentages of many nutrients, as shown here.



# LET FOOD BE YOUR MEDICINE

Food is the bedrock upon which a healthy life is based, and is the body's buffer against the stresses, strains, and the onslaughts of an increasingly toxic environment. Science has consistently shown that food can be used to support long-term health as well as treat acute conditions. Ginger, for example, is a traditional remedy for nausea, honey can be as effective as conventional medicines at soothing nighttime coughs, saffron contains antioxidants that protect against age-related vision loss, garlic helps thin the blood, thus lowering the risk of stroke, and a diet rich in tree nuts can support heart health and even men's fertility. As the cost, and acknowledged side effects, of conventional medical treatments rise exponentially, we owe it to ourselves to eat the most nutritionally dense, best-quality foods. Good food is everybody's right, and in our view the best way to democratize good food is through the widespread use of organic farming and a greater attention to the concepts of local and seasonal. In reestablishing the fundamental link between food and health and exploring the benefits of traditional diets we are not looking backward, rather we are taking the best of our inherited knowledge about food and farming and applying it to a modern future.

For example, Chinese and Ayurvedic traditions have for thousands of years followed the concept that different foods have specific, healthy properties. Some foods, such as quail eggs, are considered energizing and full of concentrated life force while others, such as barley, are more soothing to the energies of the body. Traditional approaches to food also acknowledge the seasons: of recommending warming foods like oats and spices like cinnamon in winter; cleansing foods such as nettle or dandelion in spring; cooling foods like lettuce and cucumber in summer; and sustaining foods such as pumpkin and carrots in fall.

The first half of this book will help you to identify foods that have both stood the test of time as healing foods and are shown by modern research as being particularly relevant for helping to improve a health issue. The second half contains recipes, inspired by traditional cultural practices, that benefit various parts of the body or internal systems. We hope that this information will both encourage and help you affirm the connection between food and health and make food choices for yourself and your family that lead to lifelong optimal health.

## Food as medicine

### NAUSEA



#### GINGER

has a recognized ability to quell feelings of nausea.

### COUGHS



#### HONEY

is an ancient remedy for soothing coughs and other throat complaints.

### HEART



#### GARLIC

can help your body to fight free radicals and lower blood pressure.

### LIVER



#### BRUSSELS SPROUTS

are a good source of sulfur, which enhances liver function.

### MEMORY



#### BERRIES

contain antioxidants, which can help to stave off mental decline

### CHOLESTEROL



#### NUTS & SEEDS

contain unsaturated fats, which can lower cholesterol.



## SUPPLEMENTS

A balanced diet is where health begins, but there are times when your diet may not provide all the nutrients you need. A Western diet and lifestyle can also leave us vulnerable to nutritional deficiencies including iron, calcium, magnesium, folic acid, vitamins B<sub>6</sub>, B<sub>12</sub>, C, and D. Most governments produce scientifically developed recommended dietary allowances (RDAs) to cover broadly healthy people of any age or gender. These are the basis for the Reference Daily Intake (RDI) values, which regulators use to create Daily Value (DV) packaging labels. RDAs are based on the lowest levels of nutrients required to prevent deficiency diseases, such as scurvy and rickets, and do not, as our tables on pages 338–41 illustrate, reflect the higher levels required for optimum health. This is why supplement nutrient levels are often much higher than RDA levels.

### Who will benefit most from supplements?

Even in healthy people, multivitamins and other supplements may help to prevent vitamin and mineral deficiencies. They also provide more nutrients than diet can alone, so they may help to protect against, or manage, certain diseases. However, the following categories highlight those people who can most benefit from taking daily supplements:

- People who have lost weight, who may be deficient in a wide range of vitamins and minerals.
- Vegetarians, who are more likely to be deficient in **vitamin B<sub>12</sub>**, **iron**, **vitamin D**, **zinc**, **iodine**, **riboflavin**, **calcium**, and **selenium**.
- Vegans, who are even more likely than vegetarians to be low in **protein**, **selenium**, and **B<sub>12</sub>**.
- People living a typical “student lifestyle” and anyone not eating a balanced diet is likely to benefit from a multivitamin supplement.
- Elderly people living in their own homes, who are often deficient in **vitamin D**, **vitamin A**, **vitamin E**, **calcium**, and **zinc**, and occasionally **vitamin B<sub>1</sub>** and **vitamin B<sub>2</sub>**.
- Smokers, who are most likely to be deficient in **vitamin C** and **zinc**.
- Premenopausal women, who have often been found to consume low amounts of **calcium**, **iron**, **vitamin A**, and **vitamin C**.
- Pregnant women are often advised to take a **folic acid** supplement, and studies have shown that taking a multivitamin supplement before and during pregnancy leads to a healthier pregnancy and a healthier baby.
- Anyone living in a colder climate who does not get regular sun exposure is likely to be deficient in

**vitamin D**, which can lead to, among other problems, an increased incidence of breast cancer, bowel cancer, depression, osteoporosis, Parkinson’s and heart disease.

- Anyone who is under stress is likely to benefit from taking additional **B vitamins**.
- Many men and women experiencing problems with low fertility are deficient in **zinc**.

### Are supplements safe?

Generally speaking, taking nutritional supplements from reputable companies is extremely safe, but this doesn’t mean all supplements are appropriate for everyone. It is worth doing some research to find out about the potential benefits and risks of taking a supplement. There are many sources of information available to help you become well informed. If you are suffering from a specific disease, it is advisable to talk to a knowledgeable healthcare professional before taking a supplement. If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, only take those supplements specifically recommended for you to take during this time.

While many vitamins, minerals, and herbs are known to safely prevent or treat a variety of diseases, they work by altering your body chemistry—just like any medicine. So before you take a supplement, make sure you know about how it might interact with any medications you may be already taking.


Before you turn to supplements, bear in mind that using the information in this book may help you to replace depleted nutrients by eating more of a certain food. For example, if you need to replace lost potassium, you may choose to eat more bananas or drink coconut water, or eat more fresh berries to increase your vitamin C intake.





# FOODS THAT HEAL

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE ENORMOUS VARIETY  
OF FOODS THAT HAVE INCREDIBLE HEALTH  
BENEFITS AND STAND AS A TESTIMONY TO  
“LET FOOD BE THY MEDICINE.”



# APPLES



**HELPS BALANCE BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS**



**TACKLES DIARRHEA AND CONSTIPATION**



**HELPS STRENGTHEN BONES**



**HELPS LOWER CHOLESTEROL**

Available in many varieties, juicy, crunchy apples have been celebrated since antiquity for their health benefits. They are **high in pectin**, a fiber, and **slow-release sugars** that help to improve **heart health** and regulate the body's **blood sugar levels**. They also contain many important vitamins and minerals, and substances that promote, among other things, strong, healthy bones.

## GREEN APPLES

Like other apples, green apples contain malic acid, a useful digestive aid.



## RED APPLES

Antioxidants, which can protect against neurological damage associated with conditions, such as Alzheimer's disease, are higher in red apples than in some other varieties.



## YELLOW APPLES

The pectin in yellow and all other apples helps lower the body's absorption of excess dietary fats.



## WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR?

**BLOOD SUGAR REGULATION** Fructose and antioxidant polyphenols in apples improve the metabolic balance and slow the rate at which sugar is absorbed into the bloodstream.

**CONSTIPATION AND DIARRHEA** Pectin has an amphoteric action. Paradoxically, it can provide relief from both constipation and diarrhea, depending on the body's needs.

**PROTECTING BONES** The flavonoid phlorizin, found in apple skin, may help prevent bone loss associated with menopause, because it fights the inflammation and free-radical production that lead to bone loss.

**REDUCES CHOLESTEROL** Pectin and other constituents, such as antioxidant polyphenols, reduce levels of "unhealthy" (LDL) cholesterol, and slow down its oxidation—a risk factor for atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries). Polyphenols also prevent free radicals from damaging heart muscles and blood vessels.

## HOW DO I GET THE BEST FROM IT?

**THE WHOLE FRUIT** Every part is edible. Supermarkets coat apples with wax to give a shine and keep them fresh over long periods, so always wash these apples before eating.

**GO ORGANIC AND LOCAL** Buy organic, and from sources as local as possible, for the freshest fruit without chemical contamination.

**KEEP THE SKIN ON** Peeling can remove more than half an apple's fiber, vitamin C, and iron.

## HOW DO I USE IT?

**A SIMPLE FOOD FOR RECUPERATION** Grate 1 apple and allow to brown slightly to release the juices, making it easier to digest. Take 1–2 large spoonfuls every hour or as needed.

**BAKED APPLES** Core large apples, stuff with nuts, dried fruit, and spices, such as cinnamon, and bake at 350°F (180°C) until soft.



# APRICOTS



PROMOTES CLEAR SKIN



HELPS PROTECT EYE HEALTH



PROMOTES BOWEL REGULARITY



PROTECTS AGAINST FREE-RADICAL DAMAGE

Native to eastern Asia, apricots were cultivated by the Chinese for thousands of years before they reached the rest of the world. Low in calories yet **high in fiber** and many key vitamins, apricots can be eaten fresh or dried, and the leaves and kernels can all be used. Medicinally, they can help **improve digestion**, promote **clear skin**, and protect **vision**.

## WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR?

**EYE AND SKIN HEALTH** Its high beta-carotene content is beneficial for aging eyes. Studies also show a regular high intake of nutrients such as vitamins C and E, zinc, and copper—all found in apricots—can reduce the risk of macular degeneration by 25 percent. They are also good for maintaining healthy skin.

**DIGESTIVE HEALTH** Its high fiber content aids bowel regularity, which can help prevent constipation and even bowel cancer.

**ANTICANCER EFFECTS** Its antioxidants can protect against free-radical damage linked to cancer and other diseases. The kernels also contain vitamin B<sub>17</sub> (laetrile), shown in laboratory studies to kill cancer cells.

## HOW DO I GET THE BEST FROM IT?

**EAT FRESH AND DRIED** Both are rich in fiber, vitamins A, C, and E, and other key nutrients. Buy dried apricots without added sulfites.

**APRICOT KERNEL** The seed inside the stone is edible. As well as its anticancer properties, it helps remove toxins and strengthens the body's defenses against disease.

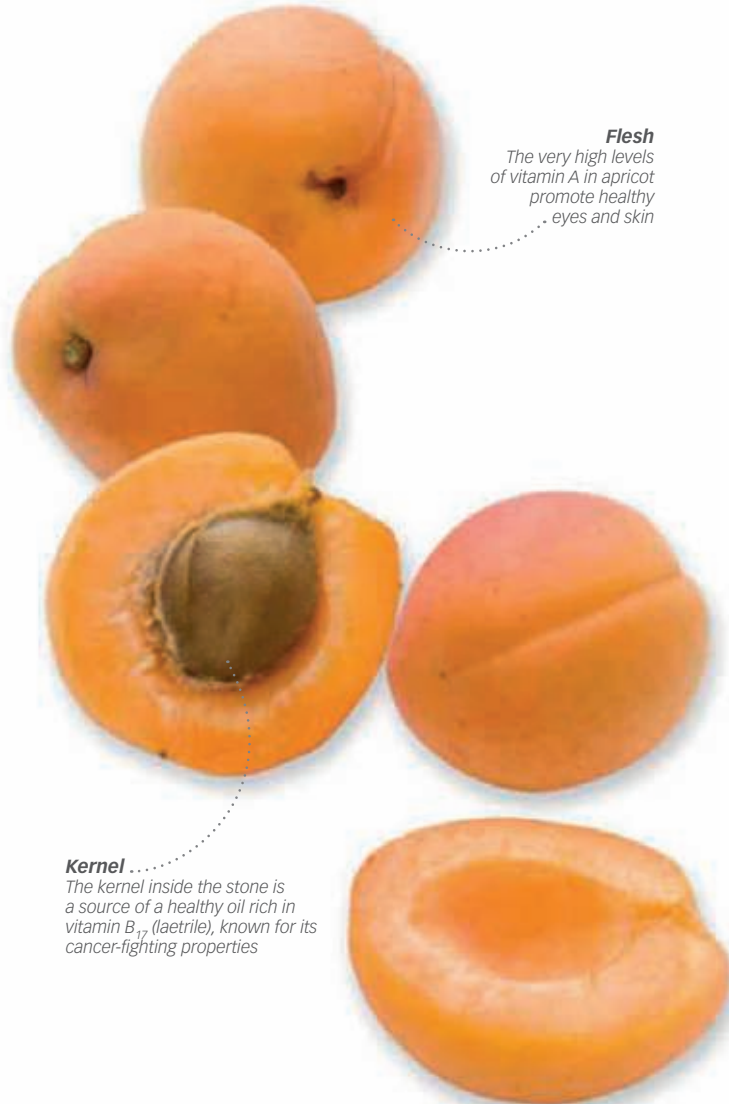
**KERNEL OIL** Use the oil, which is rich in monounsaturated fats and vitamins A, C, and E, for cooking and salad dressings.

## HOW DO I USE IT?

**TO COUNTERBALANCE FATTY MEATS** Pair with rich duck or goose meat, or include the dried fruits in stuffings or chopped into lamb stews.

**LIGHTLY POACHED** Poach fresh apricots in a light syrup of 1 part honey and 3 parts water. Add 6 crushed cardamom pods and ½ vanilla bean, and simmer until just tender.

**PICKLED APRICOTS** Japanese umeboshi, or pickled plums, are actually apricots. Eaten with rice, they stimulate digestion and prevent nausea, including nausea from hangovers.



**Flesh**  
The very high levels of vitamin A in apricot promote healthy eyes and skin

**Kernel** ...  
The kernel inside the stone is a source of a healthy oil rich in vitamin B<sub>17</sub> (laetrile), known for its cancer-fighting properties



# PEACHES AND NECTARINES



**HELPS PREVENT  
METABOLIC SYNDROME**



**FIGHTS FREE-RADICAL  
DAMAGE TO SKIN**

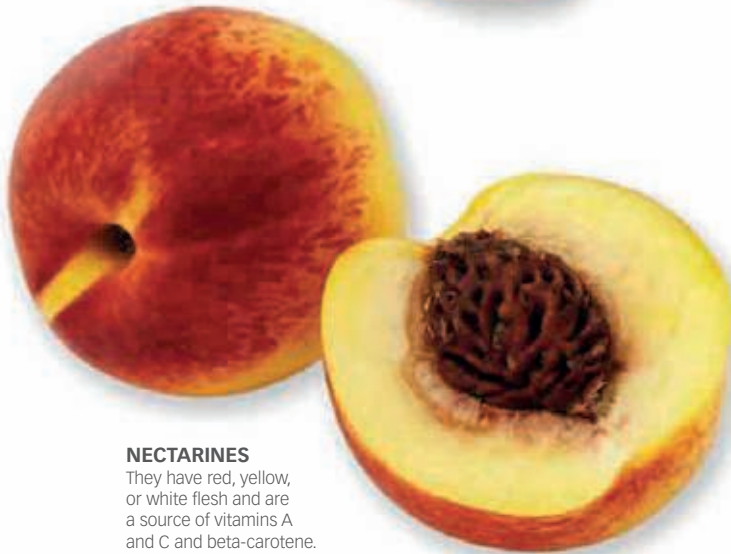


**HELPS EXPEL  
EXCESS WATER**

Peaches originate from China, where they are considered an **uplifting, rejuvenating** fruit. Like other stone fruits, peaches and nectarines (a close relative) contain a balance of phenolic compounds—anthocyanins, chlorogenic acids, quercetin derivatives, and catechins—that work synergistically to **combat metabolic syndrome** (a group of risk factors that can lead to diabetes and heart disease).

## PEACHES

These contain beta-carotene, lycopene, and lutein, which protect the heart and eyes.



## NECTARINES

They have red, yellow, or white flesh and are a source of vitamins A and C and beta-carotene.

## WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR?

**WEIGHT MANAGEMENT** Their phenolic compounds are known to have antiobesity, anti-inflammatory, and antidiabetic properties, and regular consumption of both can help prevent metabolic syndrome.

**SKIN HEALTH** Both are good sources of vitamin C, an essential component in the body's production of collagen. They are also a good source of the antioxidant lutein, which helps fight free-radical damage and supports healthy skin (and eyes).

**DIURETIC** Rich in potassium, phosphorus, and magnesium, peaches and nectarines are an antidote to a high-sodium diet and can help remove excess water from the body. They are also mildly laxative.

**ANTICANCER** Laboratory tests show that breast-cancer cells—even the most aggressive type—died after exposure to peach extract.

## HOW DO I GET THE BEST FROM IT?

**EAT IN SEASON** Eat ripe stone fruits as soon as possible after buying; they can quickly become overripe and lose their nutritional benefits, and tend to bruise easily.

**PRESERVE FOR LATER** Both peaches and nectarines make delicious jams and preserves.

## HOW DO I USE IT?

**ANTIOXIDANT ICED TEA** Slice 2 ripe peaches into a pan, add 2 cups water, and bring to a boil. Remove from the heat, add 8 green tea bags, and steep for 5 minutes. Gently squeeze the teabags as you remove them. Add a further 1 cup water and a little honey to sweeten, if you like. When cool, serve over ice with a mint garnish.

**BREAKFAST BAGEL** Top a toasted bagel with soft goat or kefir cheese and nectarine slices. A little freshly ground black pepper on top will bring out the sweetness of the fruit.

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