

It's a bird, it's a plane, it's SUPER FOODS! While they may not wear capes and tights like the typical superhero, super foods possess special powers and protect us from evil. They power our brains, fuel our bodies, lower cholesterol, and protect against heart disease, certain cancers, diabetes and respiratory infections. As an added bonus, super foods can put you in a better mood, too!



Chew on This

A super food is a food source promoting health and wellness and packed with higher nutrients per calorie as compared to other foods. Rich in minerals, vitamins, antioxidants and other nutrients, these familiar, affordable and readily available healthy foods – find them at your grocery store or farmers market – can be used in easy-to-cook recipes or eaten raw on a regular basis.

Super foods fall into a few main categories: vegetables, fruits, proteins, calcium-rich foods, grains and miscellaneous. Remember that they are not magic and no single food can provide you with everything you need to be healthy. Choose a variety of super foods from each category to meet your daily nutritional needs. While the term “super food” is not precisely

defined, one thing they all have in common is they're ‘real’ “(unprocessed)” foods. Here’s a sampling of 10 super foods... get your taste buds ready!

(Don't forget about the sidekicks! Like Batman has Robin, some super foods have sidekicks. A sidekick is a related or supporting food of a super food.)

BLUEBERRIES – rich in fiber and vitamin C; high levels of antioxidants; contain important phytochemicals believed to destroy cancer cells in the liver

Sidekicks: purple grapes, cranberries, boysenberries, raspberries, strawberries, currants, blackberries, cherries and all other varieties of fresh, frozen or dried berries

OATS – look for the word “whole” listed as the first ingredient; bread products should have at least 3g per serving of fiber

Sidekicks: wheat germ, ground flaxseed, brown rice, barley, wheat, rye, quinoa, yellow corn, couscous

OMEGA 3s – lower heart disease; help arthritis; high in monounsaturated fats, which can lower cholesterol; most prevalent in fatty cold-water fish such as wild salmon, herring, sardines and mackerel

Other forms: Eggs, flaxseed, walnuts

RAW CACAO – dark chocolate before it’s been processed and sweetened; filled with iron, magnesium and fiber; abundant in antioxidants and 3 neurotransmitters (these elevate your happiness level)

RED WINE – rich in antioxidants and high levels of resveratrol, a plant phytoalexin linked to a decreased risk for breast and prostate cancer

SOY – lowers cholesterol as much as statins, most widely prescribed cholesterol medicine; extra soy is not recommended if you have a history of breast cancer

Forms: tofu, soy milk, edamame, not soy powder or sauce

SPINACH – source of fiber and calcium; the darker the greens, the better, because it will contain more bioactive phytonutrients

Sidekicks: kale, collards, mustard greens, turnip greens, bok choy, romaine, orange bell peppers

Sources:

www.livestrong.com/article/5342-smart-shopping-superfoods/
www.livestrong.com/article/204050-raw-organic-super-foods/
www.sparkpeople.com/resource/nutrition_articles.asp?id=307
www.livestrong.com/article/484574-are-many-superfoods-bad/

SWEET POTATOES – high in fiber; lower glycemic index value than white potatoes, which helps slow the breakdown of glucose in the bloodstream

TEA – overall antioxidant power in both black and green forms; green tea has ECGC, an antioxidant that may help lower cholesterol; some benefits may come from caffeine content; brewed is better than instant

TOMATOES – source of fiber, beta-carotene and vitamin C; excellent source of lycopene when cooked; can potentially reduce risk of developing prostate, breast, lung and colon cancer

Sidekicks: red watermelon, pink grapefruit, red-fleshed papaya, strawberry guava

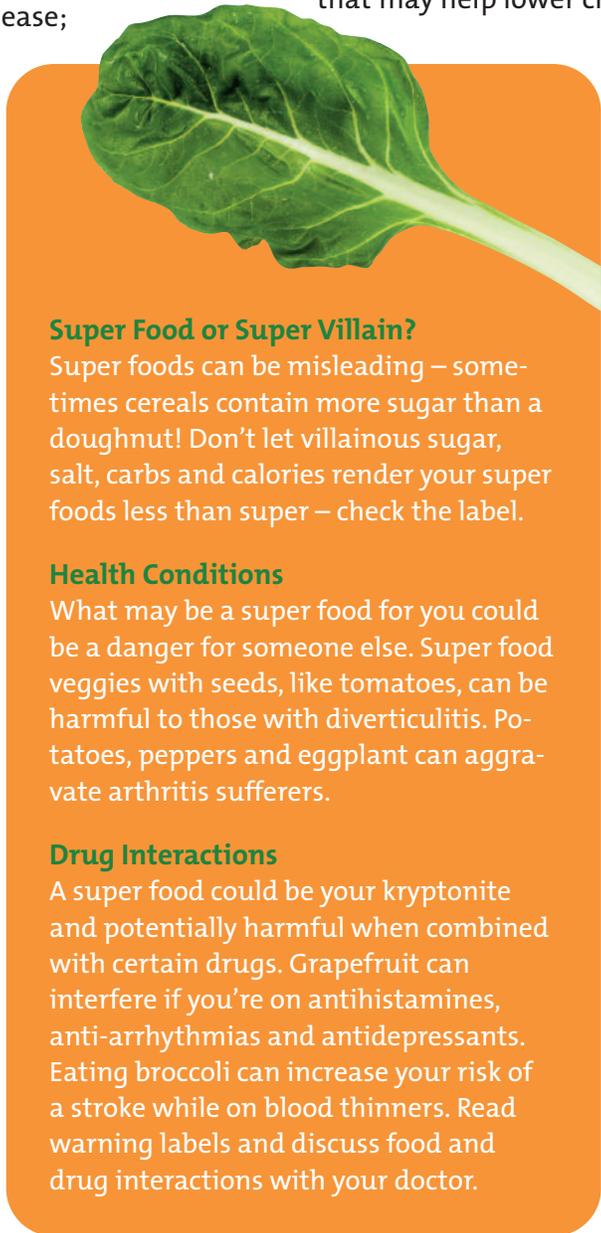
Other super foods to add to your grocery list include, but are not limited to: apples, beans (all kinds), broccoli, brussels sprouts, garlic, hummus, olive oil, oranges, peanut butter (natural), pumpkin (and its seeds), turkey (skinless) and yogurt

Why Eat Raw Foods?

Some believe that the most healthful foods for the body are uncooked. Raw food, sometimes called live or living food, has not been cooked or exposed to temperatures over 118° F. Raw

foodists consider enzymes the life force of a food, helping us to digest food and absorb its nutrients.

Cooking some foods can diminish their nutritional value. The cancer-fighting compounds in broccoli, sulforaphanes, are greatly reduced when broccoli is cooked, and certain vitamins, such as vitamin C and folate, are destroyed by heat.



Super Food or Super Villain?

Super foods can be misleading – sometimes cereals contain more sugar than a doughnut! Don’t let villainous sugar, salt, carbs and calories render your super foods less than super – check the label.

Health Conditions

What may be a super food for you could be a danger for someone else. Super food veggies with seeds, like tomatoes, can be harmful to those with diverticulitis. Potatoes, peppers and eggplant can aggravate arthritis sufferers.

Drug Interactions

A super food could be your kryptonite and potentially harmful when combined with certain drugs. Grapefruit can interfere if you’re on antihistamines, anti-arrhythmias and antidepressants. Eating broccoli can increase your risk of a stroke while on blood thinners. Read warning labels and discuss food and drug interactions with your doctor.



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