

10 Surprising Brain Foods

You've probably heard about common "brain foods" like pomegranates, blueberries, dark chocolate, salmon, and red wine ? but there are many other foods that offer brain benefits, and chances are you haven't even heard about their brain-boosting powers. Here we present ten brain foods you might be surprised to learn about!



WATERMELON

Watermelon was recently found to have high concentrations of antioxidants, including lycopene, which may help prevent cognitive decline. It also offers a strong complement of beta-carotene. It's important to note that to get the most concentrated nutrients, the flesh must be fully red and ripe.



CHICKEN

Many people are surprised to hear that chicken has brain health benefits. But chicken is a great dietary source of vitamins B6 and B12, as well as choline?all of which play an important role in brain health and neuroprotection.



SEAWEED

A [growing body of evidence](#) ^[1] suggests that regular intake of seaweed may offer brain benefits. First, seaweed is a vegetarian source of those brain-boosting DHA Omega-3 fatty acids found in salmon and other cold-water fish. It also has a lot of folic acid, which is an important brain nutrient from conception to old age. It also contains a lot of dietary magnesium, which is a key nutrient for reducing stress and protecting the body and brain from the negative effects of stress, and is also rich in lignans, which are associated with better cognitive performance in post-menopausal women.



QUINOA

Protein-rich quinoa contains all of the essential amino acids, especially lysine, which may play a key role in regulating stress and anxiety. It also contains antioxidants and a small amount of Omega-3 fatty acids.

MILK



We know it does a body good, but how about a brain? A [large Australian study](#) [2] found that participants who consumed dairy products at least once per day had significantly higher scores on multiple domains of cognitive function compared with those who never or rarely consumed dairy foods, adjusting for cardiovascular risk factors, lifestyle and dietary factors. They also found that, in general, “?frequent dairy food intake is associated with better cognitive performance but underlying causal mechanisms are still to be determined.” In other words, people who consume more dairy do better than non-dairy consumers, but it’s not 100% clear why.

SAGE



In many cultures, sage has been used medicinally for thousands of years, and recent research has found scientific evidence supporting its efficacy. Studies have shown that sage may improve memory recall and help delay cognitive decline.

SESAME SEEDS



Sesame seeds contain lipophilic antioxidants, which may prevent age-related diseases. Adding sesame seeds and other small but high-impact foods (like flaxseed and turmeric) to your dishes is a simple, tasty way to put a little brain boost in every bite.

LENTILS



Legumes like lentils are high in folic acid. Studies suggest that folic acid is important for brain plasticity across the lifespan, from developing the baby brain to maintaining good brain function in older adults.

BUTTERNUT SQUASH



Winter squashes like butternut squash are full of beta carotene, vitamin C, folic acid, antioxidants, and niacin. They offer a lot of brain and body health benefits while adding few calories to your diet.

ZA’ATAR



Za’atar is a Middle Eastern spice mixture which is a blend of sesame seeds, sumac, and oregano, thyme, or marjoram. It has a reputation of being a “brain food”, which is supported by research: both thyme and oregano contain a compound called carvacrol, which in mice, can affect dopamine and serotonin levels. Sesame seeds contain lipophilic antioxidants, which may prevent age-related diseases.

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Links

[1] <http://blog.positscience.com/2014/01/24/the-newest-brain-food-seaweed/>

[2] <http://blog.positscience.com/2012/01/30/is-milk-the-newest-brain-food/>