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## 100g of chia seeds

Written by Kristine Lockwood on March 9, 2016Share on PinterestChia is going through a renaissance of sorts. The little black specks once known for growing lush bounties of Chia-Pet hair are actually edible seeds that come from the desert plant *Salvia hispanica* (technically part of the mint family).Chia (*Salvia hispanica*): a systematic review by the natural standard research collaboration. Ulbricht C, Chao W, Nummy K. Reviews on recent clinical trials, 2010, Mar.;4(3):1876-1038.Way before the 90s topiary, the chia seed was a go-to food in Mayan diets and the basic survival ration of the Aztec army. For years, those in-the-know have praised the seed for its nutritional benefits—especially for highly active individuals. Maybe it’s time to take this little seed seriously.The Chumash, a native tribe that lived in Southern and Central California, ate chia seeds during lengthy runs to deliver messages between villages, believing they boosted energy. Today, some scientists still think chia can boost our athletic prowess. One theory is that chia slows digestion, so runners can get an energy boost later on. But even for those who aren’t embarking on a 100-mile run where they’ll need that extra energy kick, chia seeds might still be worth wofling down. Chia seeds contain more fatty acids than any other known plant.Effect of Chia oil (Salvia Hispanica) rich in omega-3 fatty acids on the eicosanoid release, apoptosis and T-lymphocyte tumor infiltration in a murine mammary gland adenocarcinoma. Espada CE, Berra MA, Martinez MJ. Prostaglandins, leukotrienes, and essential fatty acids, 2007, Jul.;77(1):0952-3278.They also have some hefty amounts of antioxidants compared to other whole food sources—even more than the oft-praised blueberry.32 No-Brainer Chia Seed Pudding RecipesOnce for ounce, chia outshines some other legendary health mainstays too. It has 15 times more magnesium than broccoli, three times more iron than spinach, six times more calcium than milk, and two times more potassium than bananas. And chia might just be a water bottle’s best friend. Chia seeds absorb up to 10 times their weight in water, which helps the human body stay hydrated longer and improves overall endurance.Omega 3 Chia seed loading as a means of carbohydrate loading. Illian TG, Casey JC, Bishop PA. Journal of strength and conditioning research / National Strength & Conditioning Association, 2011, May.;25(1):1533-4287.It can also help transport minerals around the body, which can help reduce stress, build strong bones, and regulate the heartbeat. With their magical gelling effect, chia can even be used as an egg or oil replacer in cake formulations. Borneo R, Aguirre A, León AE. Journal of the American Dietetic Association, 2010, Jun.;110(6):1878-3570.Before buying them in bulk, there are a few important facts to know about the superseeds.While chia seeds boast some impressive nutritional benefits, scientists don’t recommend we use them as our only protein source. Two tablespoons of the poppy seed look-a-likes have four grams of protein, but it’s not a complete protein source. That means chia’s protein lacks one or more of the amino acids we need to build cells. But one study found combining chia seeds with lysine-rich foods, such as meat, nuts, and eggs, forms a complete protein.Thermal and physicochemical properties and nutritional value of the protein fraction of Mexican chia seed (Salvia hispanica L.). Olivos-Lugo BL, Valdivia-López MA, Tecante A. Food science and technology international = Ciencia y tecnología de los alimentos internacional, 2010, Feb.;16(1):1082-0132.Luckily, this is one protein source that’s easy to stomach, since the human body can easily digest chia seeds. Unlike other seeds, chia seeds do not have to be ground up to be eaten. When mixed with gastric juices (yum!), the seeds form a gel, creating a barrier to digestive enzymes so the seeds’ carbohydrates break down slowly and release glucose at a steady rate. The gel could help prevent spikes in blood sugar, unlike some other carbohydrates we know (ahem, white sugar). This ‘gel when wet’ phenomenon also helps us feel fuller, as the seeds suck up digestive juices and expand, taking up some of the empty space in the stomach.And the taste? Chia seeds are quite tasteless, which makes them an easy addition to almost any snack or dish. Mix them with a favorite smoothie; let them set in almond milk to morph into a pudding-like consistency; or add them to cereal, salad, granola, or just about anything else. Find chia seeds at health markets, online, or at many bigger chain grocery stores. And extra credit: Bugs hate them, so it’s easy to find organically grown varieties.Written by Kristine Lockwood on March 9, 2016A light vegan dessert or breakfast on the go, this chia pudding is made with almond milk. Serve plain or add a variety of toppings; I like toasted almonds and coconut! An easy way to incorporate chia seeds, these delicious cookies contain no eggs or butter and are easy to make. Cookies will be soft; allow them to cool completely. A high-energy gel used by the Aztecs to run great distances. This gel can be stored and used for 3 weeks. Great substitute for milk. In baking you can’t taste the difference, and it has a pleasant taste for drinking. Cheap and good for you too! A nutritional powerhouse. If the pudding is deemed to be too thick, you may add additional milk to the mixture until desired consistency is achieved. Enjoy with the fruit of your choice. You can substitute maple syrup for the honey, if desired. These oatmeal bites are perfect for a baby who is working on baby-led weaning or a toddler who is self-feeding. These bites are packed with protein, fats, and nutrients! Once your child has mastered different fruits or nut butters, you can mix them into the cooked oatmeal. If you’re looking for a rich and decadent chocolate pudding then keep moving. As nutritious as this ‘superfood’ is supposed to be, you can’t expect the same results substituting birdseed for eggs, butter, and cream. That said, if you’re craving something sweet, relatively chocolaty, and comparatively healthful, then chia seeds may be a good option. This is my favorite gluten-free muffin recipe, very healthy and delicious! Can have as a snack or for a quick and easy breakfast. Perfect for the lunch box, the breakfast/brunch table, or the coffee room at work. A moist muffin with the sweet burst of blueberries. This overnight pudding is the perfect breakfast, highly nutritious, and a great source of fiber. Make it the night before for a quick, healthy breakfast. This is best eaten within 2 days, but it can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator up to 3 days. You don’t have to feel guilty when eating these healthy, whole wheat buns prepared in a bread machine. Perfect quick side dish for almost any meal. I recommend it with grilled chicken, peanut butter, quinoa, rice, beans, avocado, etc. Can also be served as a vegetarian main. Easy to make in less than 5 minutes, this cacao nib pudding uses a blender to turn chia seeds into a creamy treat that’s dairy free, vegan, and Paleo friendly. Give your soups, salads, yogurt, and avocado toast a crunch, nutritional boost with this easy medley of roasted seeds. They’re great to just snack on as well! Make sure all the seeds are raw, otherwise they’ll burn during the cooking process. This is a rich, moist, and delicious dessert bread, full of healthy goodness! Try this quick-and-easy, healthier-yet-tasty, on-the-go breakfast! This chia and pineapple smoothie is a refreshing and filling way to start the day! Super healthy and deliciously soft high-fiber snack made with chia seeds, ground flax, unsweetened coconut, and oatmeal. Almond butter adds protein. I use raw honey in these. These cookies are gluten free, dairy free, sugar free, low calorie, Paleo, vegan, and made with only 6 ingredients. Perfect post-workout snack! Glorious little pots of goodness! The first layer of cool chia seeds and coconut milk is topped with a second layer of smooth mango puree. Easy to make, vegan, refined sugar-free—, truly a feel-good dessert! Enjoy straightaway or chill until serving. This is a great, quick breakfast smoothie bowl. I pretty much always have frozen bananas in my freezer, because as soon as they get brown, I’ll freeze them for exactly this use. Don’t let avocado scare you! Smooth, light sweetbass and toddlers-approved. I put this recipe together after experimenting with a few others. Healthy and amazingly yummy jam! Enjoy right away or keep in airtight container for up to two weeks. The best of healthy fats and carbs. Eat it plain or sprinkled in your yogurt. Once you start you can’t stop! Seems like everyone is chatting about chia lately. Check out the video to find out if these little seeds are worthy of all the hype. If you don’t live under a rock, you’ve definitely noticed how chia seeds have been gaining serious street cred as a superfood. And for good reason: The tiny, round seeds are packed with protein-4 grams per ounce!-and omega-3 fatty acids, which promote heart health. Chia seeds are a great way to add filling protein to your oatmeal, smoothie, or avocado toast the vegetarian way. You can also use them to make trendy chia seed pudding. Just mix some chia seeds with almond milk or your dairy-free milk of choice and the seeds will develop a gel-like consistency just like pudding. Top your creation with cinnamon, nutmeg, honey, or other natural sweeteners for a satisfying, low-carb breakfast. RELATED: 10 Healthy Chia Seed Recipes Studies have shown that consuming chia seeds can help lower blood pressure and cholesterol. Just, one serving of the little guys includes 10 grams of fiber, a hit of iron for energy, and 18% of your daily calcium. Still not sure where to start? Try our very own recipe for chia chia pudding, a breakfast or treat showcasing spicy chai flavors and, you guessed it, fatty acid-packed chia seeds. To make the pudding, start by boiling a cup of almond milk. Once the milk begins to bubble, remove from heat and add three chai tea bags for that tasty flavoring. Let the tea bags steep for five minutes. Here’s where the chia seeds come in: Whisk together half a cup of the little superfood seeds, half a cup of yogurt, and half a cup of almond milk into the cooled tea mixture. Cover your “pudding” and place it in the fridge for at least four hours or overnight. The moment you wake up-voila! An easy, filling, and ready-to-eat breakfast packed with omega-3s. Written by Helen West, RD on April 29, 2019Chia seeds are tiny but extremely nutritious. Just 2 tablespoons (30 grams) contain 10 grams of fiber, 5 grams of protein, and 138 calories (1).They’re a great source of omega-3 fatty acids and some minerals essential for bone health, including calcium, phosphorus, and magnesium. Chia seeds are also flavorless, making them easy to add to many foods and recipes.Here are 35 fun ways to eat chia seeds.Share on PinterestWe include products we think are useful for our readers. If you buy through links on this page, we may earn a small commission. Here's one of the simplest ways to include chia seeds in your diet is to add them to water. To make chia water, soak 1/4 cup (40 grams) of chia seeds in 4 cups (1 liter) of water for 20–30 minutes. To give your drink some flavor, you can add chopped fruit or squeeze in a lemon, lime, or orange.Water isn’t the only liquid you can soak these seeds in.Add 1/4 cup (40 grams) of chia seeds to 4 cups (1 liter) of fruit juice and soak for 30 minutes to make a drink that’s full of fiber and minerals. This recipe gives you several servings of juice. Just make sure to keep your intake moderate, as fruit juice contains lots of sugar.You can make chia pudding as you would chia water. For a thicker, pudding-like texture, add more seeds and let the mixture soak longer.You can make this treat with juice or milk, including flavorings like vanilla and cocoa. Chia pudding makes a delicious dish that can be eaten for breakfast or as a dessert. If you don’t like the seeds’ texture, try blending it to give it a smoother finish.If you want to make your smoothie even more nutritious, consider adding chia seeds.You can use chia in almost any smoothie by soaking them to make a gel before adding.Although many people prefer to soak chia seeds, you can eat them raw, too.Try grinding or sprinkling them on your smoothie or oatmeal.To try something a little different for breakfast, you could swap your usual cereal for chia cereal.To make it, soak the seeds overnight in milk (or a milk substitute like almond milk) and top with nuts, fruit, or spices like cinnamon. You can also use mashed banana and vanilla extract to make a delicious morning treat.If you’re often in a hurry, you can use chia seeds to make a great on-the-go snack.For a quick and easy no-bake snack, try chia trifles that combine dates, cocoa, and oats. You can also add chia seeds to savory dishes like stir-fries. Just add a tablespoon (15 grams) of seeds and mix. Chia seeds can be sprinkled on your salad to give it some texture and a healthy boost. Simply mix them in and add your favorite salad vegetables. You can also add chia seeds to your salad dressing. Commercially prepared salad dressings can have as much healthier alternative. It’s possible to add chia seeds to many recipes, including bread. For example, you can try a homemade buckwheat bread that uses chia seeds. And healthy and flavorful.Another fun way to use chia seeds is as a coating for meat or fish.Ground into a fine powder, the seeds can be mixed with your usual breadcrumb coating or used to substitute it altogether, depending on your preference.Cakes are usually high in fat and sugar. However, chia seeds can help improve their nutritional profiles.Adding them to your cake mix will boost the fiber, protein, and omega-3 content.If you don’t like the gooey texture of soaked chia seeds, you can mix them with other grains. You don’t need a fancy recipe. Simply stir 1 tablespoon (15 grams) of seeds into a cup (180 grams) of rice or quinoa.Breakfast bars can be very high in sugar. In fact, some contain as much sugar as a candy bar. However, making your own with chia is quite easy. Just be sure to cut back on the sugar content.If you like this fluffy breakfast food, you could try adding chia seeds to your pancake mix.Chia seeds can absorb 10 times their dry weight in water, which makes them a great substitute for pectin in jam.Pectin is quite bitter, so substituting pectin with chia seeds means that your jam won’t need a lot of added sugar to make it taste sweet.Better yet, chia jam is much easier to make than traditional jam. Try adding blueberries and honey — and skipping the refined sugar.If you love cookies, chia seeds can give your cookie recipe a nutritional boost.Both oatmeal and chocolate chip cookies are good options. Like breakfast bars, many commercially prepared protein bars can be high in refined sugar and taste more like a candy bar than a healthy snack.Home-made chia-based protein bars are a healthy alternative to prepackaged ones.Chia seeds can be a great replacement for flour when thickening stews or gravies. Simply soak the seeds to form a gel and mix it in to add thickness.If you avoid eggs, keep in mind that chia seeds make a fantastic substitute in recipes.To substitute for 1 egg, soak 1 tablespoon (15 grams) of chia seeds in 3 tablespoons (45 ml) of water. Chia seeds are a versatile ingredient and easily mixed into any dip.You can add them into homemade dip recipes or stir them into your favorite store-bought version. Muffins are often sweet or dessert. Notably, chia seeds can be added to both savory and sweet versions of this baked good.Adding this healthy to oatmeal requires very little effort. Simply prepare your oatmeal and stir in 1 tablespoon (15 grams) of whole or ground seeds.Chia seeds can make a great yogurt topping.If you like a bit of texture, sprinkle them on top whole. If you want to avoid the crunch, mix in ground seeds.Adding seeds to crackers isn’t a new idea. In fact, many crackers contain seeds to give them extra texture and crunch.Adding chia seeds to your crackers is a good way to include them in your diet.If you use eggs or breadcrumbs to bind and thicken meatballs and burgers, you could try chia seeds instead.Use 2 tablespoons (30 grams) of seeds per pound (455 grams) of meat in your usual meatball recipe.Athletes looking for a homemade alternative to commercially produced energy gels could consider using chia.You can buy chia gels online or make your own.Adding chia seeds to drinks is an easy way to include them in your diet.Add 1 teaspoon (5 grams) into your tea and let them soak for a short time. They may float at first but should eventually sink.Soft tortillas can be eaten with a variety of fillings and are a delicious way to enjoy chia seeds.You can make your own or purchase them pre-made.Chia seeds can also be added to your favorite treats, such as ice cream.You can blend and freeze chia puddings to make a smooth ice cream or freeze them on sticks for a dairy-free alternative.Chia seeds can be used to make a high-fiber, slightly crunchy pizza crust. Simply make a chia-based dough and add your toppings.Falafel with chia can be especially enjoyable for vegans and vegetarians. You can combine them with a variety of vegetables for flavor. Making granola is simple. You can use any mixture of seeds, nuts, and oats you like. If you don’t have time to make your own, plenty of commercial granolas include chia.Another interesting way to consume chia seeds is in homemade lemonade.Soak 1.5 tablespoons (20 grams) of seeds in 2 cups (480 ml) of cold water for a half hour. Then add the juice from 1 lemon and a sweetener of your choice.You can also experiment with adding extra flavors like cucumber and watermelon.Chia seeds are a versatile and tasty ingredient. They can be added to numerous foods and recipes for a boost of protein, antioxidants, and fiber. If you’re interested in including these seeds in your diet, try out one of the valuing ideas above.Page 2Written by Ruziri Robertson, PhD on October 9, 2017Seeds contain all the starting materials to develop into complex plants. Because of this, they are extremely nutritious.Seeds are great sources of fiber. They also contain healthy monounsaturated fats, polyunsaturated fats and many important vitamins, minerals and antioxidants.When consumed as part of a healthy diet, seeds can help reduce blood sugar, cholesterol and blood pressure. This article will describe the nutritional content and health benefits of six of the healthiest seeds you can eat.Share on PinterestFlaxseeds, also known as linseeds, are a great source of fiber and omega-3 fats, particularly alpha-linolenic acid (ALA). However, the omega-3 fats are contained within the fibrous outer shell of the seed, which humans can’t digest easily. Therefore, if you want to increase your omega-3 levels, it’s best to eat flaxseeds that have been ground (2).A 1-ounce (28-gram) serving of flaxseeds contains a wide mix of nutrients (3):Calories: 152Fiber: 7.8 gramsProtein: 5.2 gramsMonounsaturated fat: 2.1 gramsOmega-3 fats: 6.5 gramsOmega-6 fats: 1.7 gramsManganese: 35% of the RDIThiamine (vitamin B1): 31% of the RDIMagnesium: 28% of the RDIFlaxseeds also contain a number of different polyphenols, especially lignans, which act as important antioxidants in the body (4).Lignans, as well as the fiber and omega-3 fats, can all help reduce cholesterol and other risk factors for heart disease (5, 6, 7).One large study combined the results of 28 others, finding that consuming flaxseeds reduced levels of “bad” LDL cholesterol by an average of 10 mmol/L (8).Flaxseeds may also help reduce blood pressure. An analysis of 11 studies found that flaxseeds could reduce blood pressure especially when eaten whole every day for more than 12 weeks (9).A couple of studies have shown that eating flaxseeds may reduce markers of tumor growth in women with breast cancer, and may also reduce cancer risk (10, 11, 12).This may be due to the lignans in flaxseeds. Lignans are phytoestrogens and are similar to the female sex hormone estrogen. What’s more, similar benefits have been shown regarding prostate cancer in men (13).In addition to reducing the risk of heart disease and cancer, flaxseeds may also help reduce blood sugar. A 2017 study found that consuming flaxseeds could help reduce blood sugar levels in people with type 2 diabetes (14).Flaxseeds are an excellent source of fiber, omega-3 fats, lignans and other nutrients. A lot of evidence has shown they may reduce cholesterol, blood pressure and even the risk of cancer.Chia seeds are very similar to flaxseeds because they are also good sources of fiber and omega-3 fats, along with a number of other nutrients.A 1-ounce (28-gram) serving of chia seeds contains (15):Calories: 137Fiber: 10.6 gramsProtein: 4.4 gramsMonounsaturated fat: 0.6 gramsOmega-3 fats: 4.9 gramsOmega-6 fats: 1.6 gramsThiamine (vitamin B1): 15% of the RDIMagnesium: 30% of the RDIManganese: 30% of the RDILike flaxseeds, chia seeds also contain a number of important antioxidant polyphenols.Interestingly, a number of studies have shown that eating chia seeds can increase ALA in the blood. ALA is an important omega-3 fatty acid that can help reduce inflammation (16, 17).Your body can convert ALA into other omega-3 fats, such as eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), which are the omega-3 fats found in oily fish. However, this conversion process in the body is usually quite inefficient.One study has shown that chia seeds may be able to increase levels of EPA in the blood (18).Chia seeds may also help reduce blood sugar. A couple of studies have shown that whole and ground chia seeds are especially effective for reducing blood sugar immediately after a meal (19, 20).Another study found that, as well as reducing blood sugar, chia seeds may reduce appetite (14).Chia seeds may also reduce risk factors of heart disease (21).A study of 20 people with type 2 diabetes found that eating 37 grams of chia seeds per day for 12 weeks reduced blood pressure and levels of several inflammatory chemicals, including C-reactive protein (CRP) (22).Summary: Chia seeds are a good source of omega-3 fats and are effective at lowering blood sugar and reducing risk factors for heart disease.Hemp seeds are an excellent source of vegetarian protein. In fact, they contain more than 30% protein, as well as many other essential nutrients. Hemp seeds are one of the few plants that are complete protein sources, meaning they contain all the essential amino acids that your body can’t make. Studies have also shown that the protein quality of hemp seeds is better than most other plant protein sources (23).A 1-ounce (28-gram) serving of hemp seeds contains (24):Calories: 155Fiber: 1.1 gramsProtein: 9.8 gramsMonounsaturated fat: 0.6 gramsPolyunsaturated fat: 10.7 gramsMagnesium: 45% of the RDIThiamine (vitamin B1): 31% of the RDIzinc: 21% of the RDIThe proportion of omega-6 to omega-3 fats in hemp seed oil is roughly 3:1, which is considered a good ratio. Hemp seeds also contain gamma-linolenic acid, an important anti-inflammatory fatty acid (25).For this reason, many people take hemp seed oil supplements.Hemp seed oil may have a beneficial effect on heart health by increasing the amount of omega-3 fatty acids in the blood (26, 27, 28).The anti-inflammatory action of the omega-3 fatty acids may also help improve symptoms of eczema.One study found that people with eczema experienced less skin dryness and itchiness after taking hemp seed oil supplements for 20 weeks. They also used skin medication less, on average (29).Summary: Hemp seeds are a great source of protein and contain all the essential amino acids. Hemp seed oil may help reduce symptoms of eczema and other chronic inflammatory conditions.Sesame seeds are commonly consumed in Asia, and also in Western countries as part of a paste called tahini. Similar to other seeds, they contain a wide nutrient profile. One ounce (28 grams) of sesame seeds contains (30):Calories: 160Fiber: 3.3 gramsProtein: 5 gramsMonounsaturated fat: 5.3 gramsOmega-6 fats: 6 gramsCopper: 57% of the RDIManganese: 34% of the RDIMagnesium: 25% of the RDILike flaxseeds, sesame seeds contain a lot of lignans, particularly one called sesamin. In fact, sesame seeds are the best known dietary source of lignans.A couple of interesting studies have shown that sesamin from sesame seeds may get converted by your gut bacteria into another type of lignan called enterolactone (31, 32).Enterolactone can act like the sex hormone estrogen, and lower-than-normal levels of this lignan in the body have been associated with heart disease and breast cancer (33).Another study found that postmenopausal women who ate 50 grams of sesame seed powder daily for five weeks had significantly lower blood cholesterol and improved sex hormone status (34).Sesame seeds may also help reduce inflammation and oxidative stress, which can worsen symptoms of many disorders, including arthritis.One study showed that people with knee osteoarthritis had significantly fewer inflammatory chemicals in their blood after eating about 40 grams of sesame seed powder every day for two months (35).Another recent study found that after eating about 40 grams of sesame seed powder per day for 28 days, semi-professional athletes had significantly reduced muscle damage and oxidative stress, as well as increased aerobic capacity (36).Summary: Sesame seeds are a great source of lignans, which may help improve sex hormone status for estrogen. Sesame seeds may also help reduce inflammation and oxidative stress.Pumpkin seeds are one of the most commonly consumed types of seeds, and are good sources of phosphorus, monounsaturated fats and omega-6 fats. A 1-ounce (28-gram) serving of pumpkin seeds contains (37):Calories: 151Fiber: 1.7 gramsProtein: 7 gramsMonounsaturated fat: 4 gramsOmega-6 fats: 6 gramsManganese: 42% of the RDIMagnesium: 37% of the RDIPhosphorus: 33% of the RDI Pumpkin seeds are also good sources of phytoosterols, which are plant compounds that may help lower blood cholesterol (38).These seeds have been reported to have a number of health benefits, likely due to their wide range of nutrients.One observational study of more than 8,000 people found that those who had a higher intake of pumpkin and sunflower seeds had a significantly reduced risk of breast cancer (39).Another study in children found that pumpkin seeds may help lower the risk of bladder stones by reducing the amount of calcium in urine (40).Bladder stones are similar to kidney stones. They’re formed when certain minerals crystallize inside the bladder, which leads to abdominal discomfort. A couple of studies have shown that pumpkin seed oil can improve symptoms of prostate and urinary disorders (41, 42).These studies also showed that pumpkin seed oil may reduce symptoms of overactive bladder and improve quality of life for men with enlarged prostates.A study of postmenopausal women also found that pumpkin seed oil may help reduce blood pressure, increase “good” HDL cholesterol and improve menopause symptoms (43).Summary: Pumpkin seeds and pumpkin seed oil are good sources of monounsaturated and omega-6 fats, and may help improve heart health and symptoms of urinary disorders.Sunflower seeds contain a good amount of protein, monounsaturated fats and vitamin E. One ounce (28 grams) of sunflower seeds contains (44):Calories: 164Fiber: 2.4 gramsProtein: 5.8 gramsMonounsaturated fat: 5.2 gramsOmega-6 fats: 6.4 gramsVitamin E: 47% of the RDIMagnesium: 27% of the RDIzinc: 21% of the RDI Sunflower seeds may be associated with reduced inflammation in middle-aged and older people, which may help reduce the risk of heart disease.An observational study of more than 6,000 adults found that a high intake of nuts and seeds was associated with reduced inflammation (45).In particular, consuming sunflower seeds more than five times per week was associated with reduced levels of C-reactive protein (CRP), a key chemical involved in inflammation.Another study examined whether eating nuts and seeds affected blood cholesterol levels in postmenopausal women with type 2 diabetes (46).The women consumed 30 grams of sunflower seeds or almonds as part of a healthy diet every day for three weeks.By the end of the study, both the almond and sunflower seed groups had experienced reduced total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol. The sunflower seed diet reduced triglycerides in the blood more than the almond diet, though.However, “good” HDL cholesterol was also reduced, suggesting that sunflower seeds may reduce both good and bad types of cholesterol.Summary: Sunflower seeds contain high levels of both monounsaturated and omega-6 fats, and may help reduce inflammation and cholesterol levels.Seeds are great sources of healthy fats, vegetarian protein, fiber and antioxidant polyphenols.Furthermore, they can help reduce the risk of certain diseases. In particular, the lignans in certain seeds may help lower cholesterol and the risk of cancer.Seeds are extremely easy to add to salads, yogurt, oatmeal and smoothies, and can be an easy way to add healthy nutrients to your diet.Page 3Written by Kerrri-Ann Jennings, MS, RD — Medically reviewed by Kathy W. Warwick, R.D., CDE — Updated on June 21, 2021Your brain is kind of a big deal.As the control center of your body, it’s in charge of keeping your heart beating and lungs breathing and allowing you to move, feel, and think.That’s why it’s a good idea to keep your brain in peak working condition.The foods you eat play a role in keeping your brain healthy and can improve specific mental tasks, such as memory and concentration.Share on Pinterest1092646326 Alexander Spataro/Getty ImagesThis article lists 11 foods that boost your brain.When people talk about brain foods, fatty fish is often at the top of the list.This type of fish includes salmon, trout, albacore tuna, herring, and sardines, all of which are rich sources of omega-3 fatty acids (1). About 60% of your brain is made of fat, and half of that fat is comprised of omega-3 fatty acids (2).Your brain uses omega-3s to build brain and nerve cells, and these fats are essential for learning and memory (2, 3).Omega-3s also offer several additional benefits for your brain.For one thing, they may slow age-related mental decline and help ward off Alzheimer’s disease (4, 5, 6, 7).On the flip side, not getting enough omega-3s is linked to learning impairments, as well as depression (3, 8).In general, eating fish seems to have positive health benefits.Some research also suggests that people who eat fish regularly tend to have more gray matter in their brains. Gray matter contains most of the nerve cells that control decision making, memory, and emotion (9).Overall, fatty fish is an excellent choice for brain health.SummaryFatty fish is a rich source of omega-3 fatty acids, a major building block of the brain. Omega-3s play a role in sharpening memory and improving mood, as well as protecting your brain against cognitive decline.If coffee is the highlight of your morning, you’ll be glad to hear that it’s good for you.Two main components in coffee — caffeine and antioxidants — can help support brain health.The caffeine found in coffee has a number of positive effects on the brain, including (10): Increased alertness. Caffeine keeps your brain alert by blocking adenosine, a chemical messenger that makes you feel sleepy (11, 12).Improved mood. Caffeine may also boost some of your “feel-good” neurotransmitters, such as dopamine (13).Sharpened concentration. One study found that caffeine consumption led to short-term improvements in attention and alertness in participants completing a cognition test (14).Drinking coffee over the long-term is also linked to a reduced risk of neurological diseases, such as Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s. The largest risk reduction was seen in those adults who consumes 3-4 cups daily (10, 15).This could at least be partly due to coffee’s high concentration of antioxidants (16).SummaryCoffee can help boost alertness and mood. It may also offer some protection against Alzheimer’s, thanks to its content of caffeine and antioxidants.Blueberries provide numerous health benefits, including some that are specifically for your brain.Blueberries and other deeply colored berries deliver anthocyanins, a group of plant compounds with anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects (17).Antioxidants act against both oxidative stress and inflammation, conditions that can contribute to brain aging and neurodegenerative diseases (18).Some of the antioxidants in blueberries have been found to accumulate in the brain and help improve communication between brain cells (17, 19).According to one review of 11 studies, blueberries could help improve memory and certain cognitive processes in children and older adults (20).Try sprinkling them over your breakfast cereal, adding them to a smoothie, or enjoying as is for a simple snack.SummaryBlueberries are packed with antioxidants that may delay brain aging and improve memory.Turmeric has generated a lot of buzz recently. This deep-yellow spice is a key ingredient in curry powder and has a number of benefits for the brain.Curcumin, the active ingredient in turmeric, has been shown to cross the blood-brain barrier, meaning it can directly enter the brain and benefit the cells there (21).It’s a potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory compound that has been linked to the following brain benefits: May benefit memory. Curcumin may help improve memory in people with Alzheimer’s. It may also help clear the amyloid plaques that are a hallmark of this disease (21, 22).Eases depression. Curcumin boosts serotonin and dopamine, both of which improve mood. One review found that curcumin could improve symptoms of depression and anxiety when used alongside standard treatments in people diagnosed with depression (23, 24).Helps new brain cells grow. Curcumin boosts brain-derived neurotrophic factor, a type of growth hormone that helps brain cells grow. It may help delay age-related mental decline, but more research is needed (25, 26).Keep in mind that most studies use highly concentrated curcumin supplements in doses ranging from 500-2,000 mg per day, which is much more curcumin than most people typically consume when using turmeric as a spice. This is because turmeric is only made up of about 3-6% curcumin (27).Therefore, while adding turmeric to your food may be beneficial, you may need to use a curcumin supplement under a doctor’s guidance to obtain the results reported in these studies.SummaryTurmeric and its active compound curcumin have strong anti-inflammatory and antioxidant benefits, which help protect the brain. In research, it has reduced symptoms of depression and Alzheimer’s disease.Broccoli is packed with powerful plant compounds, including antioxidants (28).It’s also very high in vitamin K, delivering more than 100% of the Recommended Daily Intake (RDI) in a 1-cup (160-gram) serving of cooked broccoli (29).This fat-soluble vitamin is essential for forming sphingolipids, a type of fat that’s densely packed into brain cells (30).A few studies in older adults have linked a higher vitamin K intake to better memory and cognitive status (31, 32).Beyond vitamin K, broccoli contains a number of compounds that give it anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects, which may help protect the brain against damage (33).SummaryBroccoli contains a number of compounds that have powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects, including vitamin K.Pumpkin seeds contain powerful antioxidants that protect the body and brain from free-radical damage (34).They’re also an excellent source of magnesium, iron, zinc, and copper (35).Each of these nutrients is important for brain health: Zinc. This element is crucial for nerve signaling. Zinc deficiency has been linked to many neurological conditions, including Alzheimer’s disease, depression, and Parkinson’s disease (36, 37, 38).Magnesium. Magnesium is essential for learning and memory. Low magnesium levels are linked to many neurological diseases, including migraine, depression, and epilepsy (39, 40).Copper. Your brain uses copper to help control nerve signals. And when copper levels are out of whack, there’s a higher risk of neurodegenerative disorders, such as Alzheimer’s (41, 42).Iron. Iron deficiency is often characterized by brain fog and impaired brain function (43).The research focuses mostly on these micronutrients, rather than pumpkin seeds themselves. However, since pumpkin seeds are high in these micronutrients, you can likely reap their benefits by adding pumpkin seeds to your diet.SummaryPumpkin seeds are a rich source of several B vitamins and choline, which are important for regulating mood and promoting proper brain function and development. As is the case with coffee, the caffeine in green tea boosts brain function.In fact, it has been found to improve alertness, performance, memory, and focus (75).But green tea also has other components that make it a brain-healthy beverage. One of them is L-theanine, an amino acid that can cross the blood-brain barrier and increase the activity of the neurotransmitter GABA, which helps reduce anxiety and makes you feel more relaxed (76, 77).L-theanine also increases the frequency of alpha waves in the brain, which helps you relax without making you feel tired (78).One review found that the L-theanine in green tea can help you relax by counteracting the stimulating effects of caffeine (79).It’s also rich in polyphenols and antioxidants that could protect the brain from mental decline and reduce the risk of Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s (80, 81).Plus, some studies have shown green tea helps improve memory (82, 83).SummaryGreen tea is an excellent beverage to support your brain. Its caffeine content boosts alertness, its antioxidants protect the brain, and L-theanine helps you relax.Many foods can help keep your brain healthy.Some foods, such as the fruits and vegetables in this list, as well as tea and coffee, have antioxidants that help protect your brain from damage.Others, such as nuts and eggs, contain nutrients that support memory and brain development.You can help support your brain health and boost your alertness, memory, and mood by strategically including these foods in your diet. Just one thing. Try this today: Just as important as including these brain-boosting foods in your diet is steering clear of foods that can negatively impact brain health. Check out this article for a list of the 7 worst foods for your brain that you should limit or avoid. Last medically reviewed on June 21, 2021

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