



WellnessOne Newsletter

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Boost Your Metabolism, Curb Cancer, and Slash Blood Sugar with this Easy Culinary Trick

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Herbs are not only great in meals for spice and added flavor but are key to the nutritional density in the foods you eat. Herbs can protect you against diseases, clear toxins from your body, and provide you with vitamins and minerals.

Here are some examples of such, from a list of nine assembled by Planet Green:

Basil

Basil provides Vitamins A, C, and K, along with iron, manganese, magnesium, and potassium. Loaded with flavonoids, basil helps prevent cell damage from radiation and oxygen.

Ginger

Treat nausea and an upset stomach with ginger; prevent and treat the common cold with its antiviral components.

Fenugreek

This Mediterranean herb is good for menstrual cramps, menopause symptoms, cholesterol, and diabetes.

Flat Leaf Parsley

Parsley is renowned for containing high levels of antioxidants and is full of vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber that help balance cholesterol and ward off constipation.

Turmeric



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The Cork Cancer Research Centre's test results show that turmeric can kill gullet cancer cells in 24 hours!

Sources:

» [Planet Green February 24, 2011](#)

Dr. Mercola's Comments:

Believe it or not, but common herbs and spices are actually some of the healthiest foods on the planet—topping the list of high ORAC value foods—so you can easily boost the nutritional value of your meal simply by spicing it up a bit. ORAC is a standardized method of measuring the antioxidant capacity of different foods and supplements. The higher the ORAC score, the more effective a food is at neutralizing harmful free radicals.

So, every time you flavor your meals with herbs or spices you are literally "upgrading" your food without adding a single calorie.

The Secret Powers of Herbs and Spices

But scoring high on the ORAC isn't the only reason why herbs and spices pack such a powerful punch. They're also very dense in other nutrients such as vitamins and minerals, and because of their nutrient density, they're also thermogenic, meaning they naturally increase your metabolism.



Additionally, herbs and spices have medicinal properties. This should come as no surprise considering they've been used as medicine for thousands of years prior to the advent of modern medicine that focuses on synthetic drugs in lieu of these natural counterparts.

Lastly, spices can "upgrade" your meal by reducing toxic compounds created during the cooking process. A [study published last year](#) discovered that adding an antioxidant-rich spice blend to meat prior to cooking reduced the level of malondialdehyde (a chemical marker for oxidation) in the meat by 71 percent and levels in participants' urine by 49 percent.

The researchers used a blend of:

Cloves	Cinnamon	Oregano	Rosemary
Ginger	Black pepper	Paprika	Garlic powder

You can easily recreate this simply by mixing the dry spices together and rubbing them onto the meat before you quickly sear it, or add them to your marinade.

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You can also help prevent the formation of toxic heterocyclic amines (HCAs) by [adding blueberries or cherries to your burgers](#). HCAs form when food is cooked at high temperatures, and they're linked to cancer. In terms of HCA, the worst part of the meat is the blackened section, which is why you should always avoid charring your meat, and never eat blackened sections.

Which Herbs and Spices are the Most Potent Disease Preventers?

Each spice has a unique set of health benefits to offer, but one study, published in the [Journal of Medicinal Foods](#), found a direct correlation between the antioxidant phenol content of many extracts of spices and herbs, and their ability to inhibit glycation and the formation of AGE compounds, making them potent preventers of heart disease and premature aging.

According to this study, the top 10 most potent herbs and spices are:

1. Cloves (ground)	2. Cinnamon (ground)
3. Jamaican allspice (ground)	4. Apple pie spice (mixture)
5. Oregano (ground)	6. Pumpkin pie spice (mixture)
7. Marjoram	8. Sage
9. Thyme	10. Gourmet Italian spice



Selecting Spices for Their Medicinal Benefits

As a general rule, you really can't go wrong when using herbs and spices and I recommend allowing your taste buds to dictate your choices when cooking. However, you can also choose spices based on their medicinal benefits.

Here are some examples of herbs and spices that you may want to consider incorporating more of into your diet to achieve a certain aim:

To boost your immune system:

<p>Licorice: Buffers the inflammatory response by increasing steroid output by your adrenal glands; a good buffer if your immune system is over responding to the flu.</p>	<p>Turmeric: a general immune system booster due to its high antioxidant capacity. Turmeric is 5 to 8 times stronger than vitamins C and E, and even strong enough to scavenge the hydroxyl radical, which is considered by some to be the most reactive of all oxidants.</p>
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<p>Black Pepper: Increases the bioavailability of just about all other foods -- herbs and other compounds.</p>	<p>Oregano: The active agent is rosmarinic acid, a strong antioxidant.</p>
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To reduce inflammation, and treat inflammatory and infectious conditions:

<p>Turmeric: Its potent anti-inflammatory properties come from curcumin -- the pigment that gives turmeric its yellow-orange color, and which is thought to be responsible for many of its medicinal effects. There are an estimated three to five grams of curcumin in 100 grams of turmeric. Curcumin has been shown to influence more than 700 genes, and it can inhibit both the activity and the synthesis of cyclooxygenase-2 (COX2) and 5-lipoxygenase (5-LOX), as well as other enzymes that have been implicated in inflammation.</p>	<p>Cloves: One of the most potent anti-inflammatories with anti-bacterial and antioxidant properties. Beneficial against muscle pains from injuries, arthritis and rheumatism. It also contains eugenol and its mild anesthetic benefits are useful for toothaches, gum pain and sore throats. Also offers relief from respiratory ailments such as asthma and bronchitis, and eliminates intestinal parasites, fungi and bacteria.</p>
<p>Nutmeg: A study in the Journal of Bioscience and Bioengineering found that nutmeg extract has antibacterial activity that can significantly reduce certain strains of E. coli. Nutmeg is also beneficial for joint pain and gout, and nutmeg oil has been traditionally used to treat toothaches. <i>** Please note that nutmeg contains volatile oils comprised of alkyl benzene derivatives, terpenes and myristic acid. The spice has a long history of abuse; taking too much nutmeg (one to three nuts; in some cases less) can cause side effects such as nausea, hallucinations, swelling and shock.</i></p>	<p>Ginger: Has anti-inflammatory properties and helps protect against bacteria and fungi. Also eliminates intestinal gas and relaxes and soothes your intestinal tract, while boosting your immune system. Can also protect against atherosclerosis by lowering cholesterol levels and preventing the oxidation of low density lipoprotein (LDL).</p>
<p>Peppermint: Traditionally used to sooth the digestive tract; a study published in the journal BMJ in 2008 found peppermint oil may even be beneficial in the treatment of irritable bowel syndrome. Also known to inhibit the growth of bacteria and fungi, and can help relieve symptoms of allergies and asthma.</p>	<p>Cinnamon: A powerful antimicrobial agent that also enhances your antioxidant defenses. It's been found to kill E. coli and many other bacteria. Its anti-inflammatory compounds help relieve pain and stiffness of muscles and joints due to arthritis. Also helps prevent urinary tract infections, tooth decay and gum disease.</p>



To boost mental health and/or reduce anxiety:

Nutmeg: According to a [study published in the Journal of Medicinal Food](#), an extract of nutmeg seeds elicited a significant antidepressant-like effect in mice; in some doses comparable in potency to the antidepressants imipramine and fluoxetine. In fact, reducing anxiety and treating insomnia are two ailments that nutmeg has been traditionally used for.

Natural salt: According to a [2008 study published in the journal Physiology & Behavior](#), salt may be a natural mood-elevating substance. Sodium deficiency can induce behavioral changes such as reduced motivation, fatigue, and feelings of depression. However, it's important to understand that common table salt and the salt used in processed foods is the highly processed variety, and NOT at all the same as [the natural salt your body needs to perform its vital functions](#), including the maintenance of proper brain function. So when adding salt to your meal, make sure you're using a natural unprocessed salt, such as Himalayan salt.

Turmeric—A Potent Cancer-Fighter!

A couple of spices deserve further review; one of which is turmeric. It was already mentioned twice above, both as an immune booster and potent anti-inflammatory. But perhaps its greatest value lies in its anti-cancer potential.

In India where turmeric is widely used, the prevalence of four common U.S. cancers -- colon, breast, prostate and lung -- is 10 times lower. In fact, prostate cancer, which is the most frequently diagnosed cancer in U.S. men, is rare in India and this is attributed, in part, to the curcumin in turmeric.

Dr. William LaValley from Austin Texas is one of the top natural medicine cancer physicians I know and he recently shared this important information with me. Interestingly, curcumin—the active ingredient in turmeric—actually has the most evidence based literature backing up its anti-cancer claims of any other nutrient!

Numerous studies have looked into this potential cancer-fighting link, with promising results. For instance, curcumin has been found to:

Inhibit the transformation of cells from normal to tumor, as well as inhibit the proliferation of tumor cells already existing

Help your body destroy mutated cancer cells so they cannot spread throughout your body



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Decrease inflammation	Enhance liver function
Inhibit the synthesis of a protein thought to be instrumental in tumor formation	Prevent the development of additional blood supply necessary for cancer cell growth (known as anti-angiogenesis)

Curcumin affects over 100 different pathways once it gets into a cell. Interestingly, this also applies to the metabolite of curcumin and its derivatives, which also have anti-cancer properties. According to researchers from the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, curcumin blocks a key biological pathway needed for development of melanoma and other cancers.

The spice actually stops laboratory strains of melanoma from proliferating and pushes the cancer cells to commit suicide by shutting down nuclear factor-kappa B (NF-kB), a powerful protein known to induce abnormal inflammatory response that leads to an assortment of disorders such as [arthritis and cancer](#).

Best of all, curcumin appears to be safe in the treatment of all cancers!

To get the full benefits that curcumin has to offer, you will want to look for a turmeric extract with at least 95 percent curcuminoids that contains only 100 percent certified organic ingredients.



The formula should be free of fillers, additives and excipients (a substance added to the supplement as a processing or stability aid), and the manufacturer should use safe production practices at all stages: planting, cultivation, selective harvesting, and then producing and packaging the final product.

For further details on how to use curcumin, please take a look at www.redding.wellnessone.net, sign up as a member and look in the "Office Newsletters".

Cinnamon—An Excellent Choice for Diabetics

The other spice I want to review further is cinnamon, simply because of its potential benefits against diabetes, which is a problem of epidemic proportions in the US.

Researchers have investigated the "insulin-like" effects of cinnamon for a number of years now, and it keeps proving it's a [viable contender in the fight against diabetes](#).

Among this spice's most impressive health benefits is its impact on blood sugar and ability to improve glucose control. For example, just half a teaspoon of cinnamon a day [has been shown](#) to significantly reduce blood sugar levels, triglycerides, LDL (bad) cholesterol, and total

cholesterol levels in people with type 2 diabetes. In another earlier study, [cinnamon was found to increase glucose metabolism 20-fold!](#)

Interestingly, cinnamon lowers your blood sugar by acting on several different levels, including:

- Slowing the emptying of your stomach to reduce sharp rises in blood sugar following meals
- Improving the effectiveness, or sensitivity, of insulin
- Enhancing your antioxidant defenses. A study published in 2009 stated that "polyphenols from cinnamon could be of special interest in people that are overweight with impaired fasting glucose since they might act both as insulin sensitizers and antioxidants." Yet another bioflavanoid compound called proanthocyanidin may alter the activity of insulin signaling in your fat cells.

Researchers have suggested people with diabetes may see improvements by adding 1/4 - 1 teaspoon of cinnamon to their food, and I see no reason not to give this a try if you enjoy cinnamon (along with doing the other [essentials to improve diabetes](#), including eliminating fructose and grains from your diet and exercising daily).



Clearly, adding ample amounts of cinnamon to your diet is an incredibly inexpensive and great tasting tool for diabetics, and the likelihood of this food causing any long-term complications is very small.

Go Ahead, Spice Up Your Life!

All these benefits give you ample reasons to be adventurous in adding spices to your meals, and to be generous in the amounts you use. It will be worth it for the flavor enhancement