

# SUMMER EATING



## Summertime Superfoods

All of that sunshine means that some of our favourite fruits and vegetables are at their best during the summer months. Nutritionally speaking, there's no such thing as a *superfood*. It was a term coined for marketing purposes to influence food trends. While no single food holds the key to good health and disease prevention, many nutrient-rich options may be worthy of the title!

### Watermelon



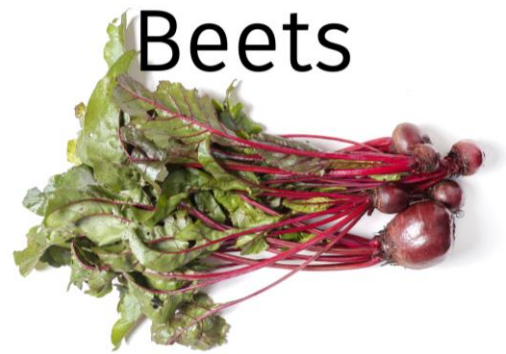
Refreshing and juicy, watermelon is 92% water, so it's one of the most hydrating summer foods. Its red colour means it's a concentrated source of heart-protecting lycopene, which is linked to health benefits ranging from heart health to protection against sunburns and certain types of cancers. You absorb more lycopene when you eat it with fat, so try watermelon drizzled with olive oil in a sweet and savory summer salad, or brush it with oil and grill it.

- ▶ Provides 30% of the daily value of vitamin A to keep your eyes healthy.
- ▶ High in potassium, which is great for the kidneys, and if enjoyed post-workout, aids in recovery.
- ▶ It's sweet, but has a low glycemic load so it won't spike blood sugar!

Beets provide a bit of almost every nutrient you need! They are low in calories and offer a great source of nutrients including fiber, folate, and vitamin C.

- ▶ With a high concentration of dietary nitrates, raw beets have been shown to temporarily lower blood pressure in just a few hours.
- ▶ A great food for athletes, beets are a source of l-glutamine, which helps with recovery and may also enhance performance by improving oxygen use.
- ▶ Their purple pigment called betalains may have anti-inflammatory effects – though nutritional research is ongoing.

### Beets



### Berries



All those seeds mean berries are a good source of fiber including soluble fiber, which slows the movement of food through the digestive tract and reduces hunger. They are also low in sugar and calories.

- ▶ Berries are high in antioxidants like anthocyanins, which support the vascular system and brain. They may also lower the risk of a heart attack.
- ▶ Berries may help reduce inflammation and decrease your risk of heart disease and other health problems.
- ▶ Blueberries are a great source of vitamin K1 for bone health.
- ▶ Strawberries provide 150% of the RDI of vitamin C for immune health and provide prebiotic fiber to promote the growth of good bacteria for digestion health.

Tomatoes are a source of iron, folate, manganese, phosphorus, and niacin, and support the health of your skin and heart. Made of 95% water, tomatoes are super hydrating, and eating them regularly can help defend your skin against harmful UV rays.

# Tomatoes



- ▶ A single medium-sized tomato can supply almost 30% of your RDI of vitamin A (vital for vision and cell health) and 28% of vitamin C.
- ▶ Contain key carotenoids such as lutein and lycopene, which can protect the eyes against light-induced damage.
- ▶ A good source of potassium, tomatoes help to lower blood pressure and prevent cardiovascular disease.
- ▶ With a high lycopene content, tomatoes can help to protect against a variety of cancers, cardiovascular disease, and even aging!

# Peppers



Bell peppers are one of the richest sources of vitamin C with 169% of your RDI – three times more than an orange! A source of healthy antioxidants that neutralize free radicals, peppers can help alleviate symptoms of arthritis and asthma and reduce the risk of heart disease, some cancers, and cataracts.

- ▶ Contain vitamin B6 (important for red blood cell formation), folic acid, and fiber – all of which can help reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke.
- ▶ Provides vitamin E for healthy nerves and muscles.
- ▶ In addition to vitamin C, peppers are rich in iron. When vitamin C is combined with iron, absorption is much more efficient, which makes it a great food for anemia and low iron.

## Let's Hear It for Fresh Herbs!

Fresh herbs are often used to garnish or enhance a dish, but we don't often think of their nutritional benefits.

**Rosemary** is a good source of iron, calcium, and vitamin B6, and offers antioxidant and anti-inflammatory benefits that reduce allergy symptoms and nasal congestion.

**Parsley** is useful in treating fluid retention and edema. It increases urine output without affecting electrolytes such as sodium and potassium.

**Basil** can help lower cholesterol and is high in antioxidants. It also contains rientin and vicenarine, which are water-soluble flavonoids that may protect white blood cells.



**Thyme** is high in vitamin C and is also a good source of vitamin A and manganese.

**Oregano** contains phytochemicals and vitamin E and can help fight infection and treat respiratory issues such as cough, cold, flu, and bronchitis.

**Cilantro** is a good source of vitamins A, C, K, and E, and may help fight infection and reduce inflammation.

Sources [www.healthline.com/](http://www.healthline.com/)  
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