

This Is Your Feel-Happier Diet: 8 Foods That Boost Your Mood

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The words “diet” and “deprivation” may as well be one and the same for many people. But when you’re on a diet, you may see your waistline changing — but you won’t necessarily feel vibrant and nourished.

“Deprivation is what causes us to fly off the wagon,” health coach Sheila Viers tells Yahoo Health. “Of course we want to learn to eat whole foods for the majority of our nourishment, but it’s meant to be a pleasurable experience as well. What is nourishing to our spirit (meaning no guilt, shame or fear) is nourishing to our physical body too.”

So, what about a diet focused on happiness and helping you feel more nourished? Here are eight foods that will do just that.

Body-Peace Resolution is Yahoo Health’s January initiative to motivate you to pursue wellness goals that are not vanity-driven, but that strive for more meaningful outcomes. We’re talking strength, mental fitness, self-acceptance — true and total body peace. Our big hope: This month of resolutions will inspire a body-peace revolution. Want to join us? Start by sharing your own body-positive moments on social media using the hashtag [#bodypeaceresolution](#)



Fish

Omega-3 fatty acids found in salmon not only help with depression, but will kick start circulation, energy, and brain activity. “Omega 3s are anti-inflammatory and are really important for cognition,” registered dietitian Keri Glassman, founder of The Nutrition School, tells Yahoo Health. “You can get them in salmon and other fatty fish, but I also recommend taking them

as a supplement if you don’t enough eat fish naturally.”



Nuts and seeds

These handy grab-and-go foods are another great source of omega 3s as well as vitamin B. Consuming omega-3s “positively influence your behavior, attention span, mental activity, brain development, and function,” registered dietitian Trishna Joshi, the lead nutritionist at Fresh Diet, tells Yahoo Health. “Vitamin B is critical for focus, energy and concentration, helps you feel good and fuels your body with the energy and concentration.”



Apples

One of the biggest reasons people are cranky and irritable is because they’re hungry — and that’s when they reach for that quick boost via sugar and refined carbs. And while “things like coffee and caffeine ... give you a buzz, they don’t give you actual real energy,” notes Glassman. Meanwhile, “eating things that aren’t processed and full of fiber and protein provide a steady flow of energy. An apple and peanut butter has the carbohydrates for that necessary quick energy, but also the components like fiber, protein and fat that provides satiety.”



Leafy Greens

“Feelings of anxiety like stress, excitement, and impatience can creep up on all of us every day,” says Joshi. So, reach for foods that are good for your mind such as leafy greens, like spinach, kale, arugula, and collard greens. Plus, “folate and phytonutrients found in greens may help reduce anxiety,” Joshi notes.



Berries

“There’s a reason blueberries are called a brain food,” reveals Glassman. “They’re super high in antioxidants, which helps reduce inflammation and is good for your brain function.”



Dark chocolate

A little bit of chocolate can actually help you have a positive outlook. “Foods like dark chocolate have chemical properties that help release endorphins, increase circulation, and boost immunity,” Joshi says. “This also leads to better energy.”



Oranges

“Vitamin C is known to reduce stress and can also boost your immune system,” adds Glassman. “So, it’s especially important to eat things like oranges and other citrus fruits in the winter time to stay calmer and healthier.”



Cheese

Thanksgiving isn't the only time to make use of good ol' sleep-inducing tryptophan. Eating turkey and other foods like cheese (such as cheddar, swiss, and mozzarella) can help you purposely relax at the end of a hectic day. "Foods that contain tryptophan, an amino acid that produces melatonin known for its calming effects, in combination with a healthy fat will help our bodies feel more relaxed and ready for bed," says Joshi. "When items like cheese are combined with whole fats, like nuts or butter, it modulates a slow release of the chemicals that make you sleepy." (Just make sure you don't overdo it — cheese can also be high in calories!)