



Nutrition Nibbles

Spice Up Your Meals and Your Life

Smoothie Delicious

Healthy eating does not have to be bland and boring! Good nutritious food should not taste gross! Unleash the power of herbs and spices on your palate and awaken the force of these mighty morsels on your wellbeing.

What's the difference between an herb and a spice? While we use the terms interchangeably, they are not the same. **Herbs** are considered to be plant leaves or flowers used for flavoring or garnishing foods. Herbs may also have medicinal uses or lend aroma to perfumes. On the other hand, **spices** are the dried portion of a plant (other than the leafy portion), including the bark, roots, berries, seeds, and twigs, used to flavor food. Like herbs, spices also boast medicinal and aromatic properties.

Simply put, herbs and spices add flavor and variety to our diet but did you know they can play a role in your health too? Herbs and spices are rich in antioxidants, substances that delay or prevent cellular damage, a.k.a. cancer fighters.

Clove, cinnamon, rosemary, thyme, oregano and basil are among the richest in antioxidants among dried herbs and spices.¹ For instance, 1/2 teaspoon of clove contains the same cancer-fighting antioxidant content as 1/2 cup of blueberries or cranberries!¹ One teaspoon of dried oregano is as antioxidant rich as three ounces of almonds and 1/2 cup of asparagus.² We shouldn't overlook the value that herbs and spices can add to our health!

Oregano: This powerful pizza topping boasts antibacterial and antimicrobial properties. It promotes respiratory health and combats common sources of gastrointestinal distress like ulcers and heartburn. Sprinkle some fresh or dried oregano on your salads, bruschetta, pizza, and sandwiches.

Rosemary: Delicious when added to poultry, rosemary can boost brain power by preserving memory. This herb improves blood circulation which may relieve high blood pressure as well as headaches. Rosemary also calms many digestive woes

No one would argue that smoothies aren't delicious but the real question is: are they nutritious? They're cool and refreshing. They make you feel like a superior health nut but is there more to this oh so smoothie story?

Pros: Tasty, cool, often sweet, full of vitamins and minerals, may contain produce you wouldn't normally chew (kale, anyone?), convenient (once it's made)

Cons: Calorie-packed, less digestion needed, not as satisfying as chewing calories, still takes time to prep and clean-up

Bottom Line: Be careful!

Let's address some of the drawbacks to smoothies, shall we? Calories, calories, calories! Would you really eat 1 apple, 1 banana, 1/2 avocado, 3 cups of kale, 1/2 cup yogurt, 1/4 cup oats, 1 Tbsp chia seeds and wash it down with 1 cup of orange juice? Probably not! That seems like it would take a while to eat...Well, that's what actually happens when you throw it a blender and slurp it down. You just sucked up roughly 750 calories. Remember, the

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including intestinal gas and acid reflux. Use rosemary in your favorite protein rubs or sprinkle it on top of your dinner rolls.

Thyme: You'll want to make time for this tasty herb. Thyme has antibacterial and antifungal properties making it a germ-fighting powerhouse. Uniquely, thyme can stimulate the appetite, increase urine production, and relieve muscle spasms including cough. To boot, thyme freshens breath. Pair thyme with your next chicken or fish entree; add it to your favorite soup; even combine it with strawberries and infuse your favorite lemonade.

Basil: Nothing brightens bruschetta like basil. Fresh or dried, basil is the cure for tummy troubles. It may even increase blood circulation. Toss basil into a fresh caprese salad, blend it up into a flavorful pesto, or add it to your fruity summer drinks. Any way you try it, you are sure to like it!

Clove: Best known for its aroma, clove claims antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties. A natural pain-reliever, clove relieves upset stomach, toothaches, and skin irritations. Don't have a clue of what to do with cloves? Insert whole cloves into ham before baking or to flavor oranges. Use ground clove in curries.

Cinnamon: Many people's favorite spice, cinnamon is very versatile. From a health

standpoint, cinnamon may help with blood sugar control and improve cardiovascular health. Cinnamon also has antibacterial and antifungal effects. Add cinnamon to your morning cereal; sprinkle it on fruit slices; place some cinnamon in your coffee grounds before brewing. Add a cinnamon stick with some orange slices to a pitcher of water for a spice infusion.

I hope you are now inspired to move herbs and spices from your pantry to your plate. Begin building your meals around these flavorful plants--your taste buds and your health will thank you for it!

References:

- http://www.eatingwell.com/nutrition_health/nutrition_news_information/top_fresh_and_dried_herbs_and_spices_for_antioxidants
- <http://cancerdietitian.com/2010/02/cancer-fighting-spices-oregano.html>

Resources:

McCormick Science Institute
WebMD Vitamins and Supplements Center

How long do herbs and spices last?

Dried spices (whole): 4 years
Dried spices (ground): 2 years

Wrap fresh herbs in a damp paper towel or place stems in a small container of water, store them in the fridge or a cool place and they should remain fresh for at least 1 week.

Cooking Tip:

Your recipe calls for fresh herbs. Don't have any on hand? Substitute in the dried version by using half the amount called for.

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typical meal ranges from 400-600 calories, depending on how hungry you are and if you're male or female. You're better off sharing that smoothie with a friend or saving half for later.

I find chewing my calories much more satisfying than drinking them. My mouth gets a workout, my stomach and intestines get to do the job they were built for--digestion, and I get to enjoy feeling some degree of fullness and satisfaction that is often missing when I drink a smoothie.

To give you a realistic idea of what a "healthy" smoothie (that doesn't contain fro yo or sherbet) looks like, add up your add-ins:

1 medium fruit or 1/2 banana	=	60 calories
1 cup berries or melon	=	60 calories
1 cup juice	=	120 calories
1 cup leafy greens	=	25 calories
1/2 avocado	=	160 calories
1/4 cup raw oats	=	75 calories
1 Tbsp nut butter	=	90 - 100 calories
6 almonds or 10 peanuts or 4 walnut halves	=	45 calories
1 Tbsp chia	=	60 calories
1 Tbsp ground flaxseed	=	30 calories
1 oz protein powder	=	100 calories
1 cup fat free milk or milk alternative	=	90 calories
6 oz nonfat plain Greek yogurt	=	100 calories
1 tsp sugar, honey, or agave	=	15 - 20 calories