



HOW TO COOK REAL FOOD

BONUS LESSON

nuts & seeds



nuts & seeds: why they're good.

the value of nuts and seeds

Brimming with nutrients: wholesome fats, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants, nuts and seeds provide both nutritive value and interest to meals. These combined factors contribute significant benefits to human health and, for this reason, can prove particularly nutritive when properly prepared.

Health Benefits

Walnuts, and other nuts, are rich in bioactive compounds that may account for their particularly rich nutritive value. Indeed, the consumption of nuts is linked to beneficial effects on the heart and cardiovascular system and may help to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease¹, a disease that plagues over 80 million Americans and claims the lives of over 800,000 each year.²

The benefits of nuts and seeds extend beyond beneficial effects on the human heart and cardiovascular system. Indeed, they may play an overall protective role on human health in multiple ways. Pumpkin seeds, for instance, may help to support prostate health while almonds are known to help protect against diabetes by mitigating increased blood sugar after meals, particularly those that are rich in carbohydrates³.

Pistachios, too, appear to be protective of health. Indeed, a recent look at pistachios and their role in human health illustrates that these nuts may guard against cancer, cardiovascular disease, inflammatory diseases and the overproduction of free radicals⁴.

Minerals, Wholesome Fats and Vitamin E

Just a 1-ounce serving of walnuts contains 7% of the daily value of folate, and over 22% the daily value for manganese, while a 1-ounce serving of pumpkin seeds contains 23% of the daily value for iron, 38% for magnesium and 14% for zinc. Similarly, a 1-ounce portion of almonds contains 37% the daily value for vitamin E and 17% the daily value of riboflavin.

Nuts and seeds are remarkably rich stores of vitamins and minerals - and that nutritive value is increased through proper preparation methods.



nuts & seeds: antinutrients

food phytate and enzyme inhibitors

While nuts and seeds clearly provide benefits to human health, and, like many whole foods, can help our bodies to fight disease, they are often difficult to digest and contain antinutrients - certain components naturally found in many plant foods that can actually inhibit the maximum nutritive value of the food we eat. For this reason, it is critical that we learn to prepare nuts and seeds properly so that we can fully reap the benefits of these foods while mitigating the undesired effects of antinutrients such as food phytates and enzyme inhibitors



Without properly preparing nuts and seeds to mitigate the effects of food phytates and enzyme inhibitors, our bodies cannot and do not reap the full nutritional rewards of these beneficial foods. Food phytate, a natural component found in nuts, seeds, grains and legumes, binds up minerals in the digestive tract preventing your body from absorbing the full complement of vital minerals found in these wholesome and healthful foods. Meanwhile enzyme inhibitors found naturally in nuts and seeds inhibit the effects of naturally occurring food enzymes, meaning your body has to work harder to digest these foods.

Fortunately, the effects of antinutrients can be easily mitigated by properly preparing nuts and seeds. In your kitchen, using proper, simple and time-honored techniques, you can increase the nutritive value and digestibility of these wholesome foods - improving their value in your kitchen and on your dinner plates.

Soak or Sprout

While nuts and seeds can be powerfully nutritive, the effects of naturally occurring anti-nutrients presents some dilemmas in terms of mineral absorption and proper digestion. Fortunately, these issues are easily overcome by incorporating proper food preparation techniques.

Soaking or sprouting nuts and seeds helps to create an environment in which the nut or seed is likely to germinate, and its through this simple process that the full nutritive value of these wholesome, healthy foods can be released. Traditionally, many nuts and seeds were first soaked in slightly salty water before being dried and consumed, and this practice degrades phytates thus improving mineral absorption while also eliminating the effects of enzyme inhibitors.

A simple process, used in the two recipes covered in this bonus lesson, you simply need to combine warm water with a little bit of unrefined sea salt and pour this mixture over nuts and seeds.

nuts & seeds: preparation

maximizing nutrition through simple techniques

In the following recipes, I call for soaking your raw nuts or seeds in a slightly salty solution of mineral-rich unrefined sea salt and clean, warm water. This combination of salt and water creates an environment that facilitates the release of antinutrients such as food phytate which binds up minerals and enzyme inhibitors. This can make nuts and seeds difficult to digest. It's a simple technique, requiring only a few minutes of active preparation time. We use this technique in the two recipes highlighted in this lesson: pesto and dried fruit and nut snack bars.



Soaking Nuts and Seeds: A Simple Technique

This simple, but effective process helps to mitigate the effects of antinutrients naturally found in nuts and seeds, thus improving the value of these wholesome, healthy and nourishing foods in your diet.

1. Stir about one teaspoon unrefined sea salt into about 1 cup nuts or seeds.
2. Cover the mixture of nuts or seeds and unrefined sea salt in fresh, clean and slightly warm filtered water.
3. Stir the mixture to ensure the salt fully dissolves.
4. Allow the nuts or seeds to soak in the salty mixture overnight.
5. Drain the seeds, and either dry them using a dehydrator or use them right away.

nuts & seeds: the recipes

Pestos & Snack Bars

In the following recipes, I call for soaking your raw nuts or seeds in a slightly salty solution of mineral-rich unrefined sea salt and clean, warm water. This combination of salt and water creates an environment that facilitates the release of antinutrients including food phytate which binds up minerals and enzyme inhibitors which can make nuts and seeds difficult to digest. It's a simple technique, requiring only a few minutes of active preparation time. We use this technique in the two recipes highlighted in this lesson: pesto and dried fruit and nut snack bars.



Pesto

A pesto is, classically, a combination of fresh basil, pine nuts, unrefined olive oil and parmesan cheese; however, this simple combination of fresh herbs, nuts or seeds and oil can be used as a basis for many different sauces: a combination of pumpkin seeds and cilantro yields a beautifully sauce suitable for grilled meats while a combination of walnuts and arugula makes for a delicious spread that can be added to sandwiches or used as a sauce for potatoes or pasta.

The key is to choose your ingredients wisely, selecting the freshest herbs or greens at the height of their season and pairing them with nutrient-rich, flavorful oils - particularly olive oil with its beneficial profile of fatty acids particularly monounsaturated fat.

Dried Fruit and Nut Bars

Snack bars and energy bars that we find on our grocery store shelves are filled with processed and refined ingredients: soy protein isolate, whey powder, artificial sweeteners, sugars. And while you can find simple energy bars featuring only dried fruit and nuts in many grocery stores and health food stores, they can be expensive often costing up to \$2 each.

A simple, nutrient-dense and flavorful alternative to store-bought snack bars can be made at home for a fraction of the cost using soaked nuts, dates, dried fruit and spices, saving up to \$1.60 for each, individual bar.

While the cost savings of preparing energy bars at home is certainly appealing, these fruit and nut bars are teeming with nutrients, and are a naturally raw food so many food enzymes remain intact - further enhanced by the soaking of the nuts. These energy bars are also free from unappealing additives you find in many snack bars on grocery store shelves.

pestos: herbs, seeds, oils

basic recipe

ingredients:

- 1/2 cup raw seeds or chopped nuts
- filtered water, to cover seeds
- 1 teaspoon unrefined sea salt
- 2 cups chopped fresh herbs or greens
- 1 tablespoon chopped allium (onion, shallot, leek, scallion, garlic etc)
- 1/2 cup unrefined, cold-pressed oil
- Optional: any additions of your choosing

equipment:

- food processor, blender OR mezzaluna

method:

1. Place nuts or seeds in a bowl, cover with warm filtered water and sprinkle in 1 teaspoon unrefined sea salt. Cover and leave on your counter for 12 to 18 hours to soak.
2. After 12 to 18 hours of soaking, drain the water from the seeds.
3. In a food processor or blender, combine soaked seeds or nuts with two cups fresh herbs and 1 tablespoon chopped allium.
4. Process the ingredients together until just combined, then continue to process while drizzling in 1/2 cup unrefined, cold-pressed oil into the mixture until thoroughly and well-mixed.
5. Serve with vegetables, on meats as a dressing for soaked whole grains or any way you want.

| must-haves | | | | optional additions |
|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| <i>nuts or seeds</i> | <i>herbs or greens</i> | <i>alliums</i> | <i>unrefined oils</i> | |
| pine nuts | basil | garlic | olive oil | parmesan cheese fresh chili peppers, lime |
| pepitas | cilantro | red onion | pumpkin seed, avocado oil | |
| walnuts | arugula, spinach | shallots, red onion | walnut, olive oil | lemon ginger, lime pasture-raised bacon |
| sunflower seeds | spinach | garlic | olive oil | |
| almonds | parsley | garlic, shallots | olive, almond oil | |
| cashew | cilantro, basil | garlic, shallots | sesame, olive oil | |
| hazelnuts | lambsquarters | red onion | walnut, hazelnut, olive oil | |

pesto: recipe worksheet

Recipe Name: _____

ingredients:

What additional ingredients did you include in your pesto recipe?

Nuts or Seeds: _____

Herbs or Greens: _____

Allium: _____

Unrefined Oil: _____

Other: _____

Other: _____

Basic Ingredients:

- 1 cup nuts
- filtered water, to cover
- 1 teaspoon unrefined sea salt
- 1 cup chopped dates
- 1 cup chopped dried fruit
- spices, as desired
- coconut oil or other fat, for oiling your hands

method & appeal:

Did you make any adjustments to the preparation of this recipe?

How many servings did this recipe make? _____

How much time did this recipe require? _____

On a scale of 1 to 5, how well did this recipe appeal to your family?

1 (Unappealing)

2

3

4

5 (Fantastic)

Will you make any changes next time? _____

notes:

Do you have any notes for next time you'll make this recipe? Will you try new nuts or dried fruit and spice combinations?

snack bars: dried fruit, nuts

basic recipe

ingredients:

- 1 cup nuts
- filtered water, to cover
- 1 teaspoon unrefined sea salt
- 1 cup chopped dates
- 1 cup chopped dried fruit
- spices, as desired
- coconut oil or other fat, for oiling your hands

equipment:

- food processor OR blender
- baking sheet
- waxed paper OR parchment paper

method:

1. Place nuts in a bowl, cover with warm filtered water and sprinkle in 1 teaspoon unrefined sea salt. Cover and leave on your counter for 12 to 18 hours to soak.
2. After 12 to 18 hours of soaking, drain the water from the nuts and set them aside.
3. In a food processor or blender, process chopped dates and dried fruit together until they form a paste. Remove from the blender or food processor and set aside.
4. Pulse the soaked nuts in the food processor or blender until finely chopped.
5. Oil your hands with coconut oil or another nourishing fat and knead the nuts thoroughly into the paste of dates and dried fruit.
6. Generously grease a baking sheet, then plop the mixture of dates, dried fruit and nuts onto the baking sheet.
7. Pat down the mixture with your hands, and allow it to chill in the refrigerator for 8 to 10 hours to set.
8. After allowing the mixture to set, grease a knife before cutting into bars.
9. Package in waxed paper or parchment paper and store in the fridge.

| must-haves | | | optional |
|-------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>nuts</i> | <i>dates</i> | <i>dried fruit</i> | <i>spices</i> |
| almonds | 1 cup | cherries | cinnamon, almond extract |
| pecans | 1 cup | apricots | cardamom, cinnamon |
| walnuts | 1 cup | apples, pears, raisins | cinnamon, clove |
| cashews | 1 cup | pineapple, mango, papaya, coconut | ginger |
| pistachios | 1 cup | apricots | cardamom, ginger |
| peanuts | 1 cup | cherries, raisins | |
| almonds | 1 cup | blueberries | lemon zest |
| hazelnuts | 2 cups | coconut | cocoa, carob |

snack bars: recipe worksheet

Recipe Name: _____

ingredients:

What additional ingredients did you include in your snack bar recipe?

Nuts: _____

Dried Fruit: _____

Spices: _____

Other: _____

Other: _____

Basic Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup raw seeds or chopped nuts
- filtered water, to cover seeds
- 1 teaspoon unrefined sea salt
- 2 cups chopped fresh herbs or greens
- 1 tablespoon chopped allium (onion, shallot, leek, scallion, garlic etc)
- 1/2 cup unrefined, cold-pressed oil

method & appeal:

Did you make any adjustments to the preparation of this recipe?

How many servings did this recipe make? _____

How much time did this recipe require? _____

On a scale of 1 to 5, how well did this recipe appeal to your family?

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5 (Fantastic)

Will you make any changes next time? _____

notes:

Do you have any notes for next time you'll make this recipe? Will you try new nuts or dried fruit and spice combinations?

nuts & seeds: sources

1. Ros. Nuts and Novel Biomarkers of Cardiovascular Disease. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. May
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