

Natural Healing Express Weekly

Column Volume 17 Super Foods: Sweet Potatoes, Tomatoes and Walnuts

This week we will continue our series on Super Foods mentioning in more specific detail Sweet Potatoes, Tomatoes and Walnuts and their various health benefits.

Sweet Potatoes- For those of you who like sweet potatoes, this is an excellent and tasty source of beta carotene. They also have almost twice as many antioxidants as squash. A couple of articles ago someone emailed and asked what I meant by “the value of beta carotene”. Let’s start with this, Beta Carotene is a big contributor to our ability to boost and strengthen our immune system. Beta Carotene also reduces the oxidation of LDL cholesterol and cholesterol build up in the arteries. Sweet Potatoes also contain Vitamins C & E, folate, thiamine, riboflavin and minerals copper, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus and potassium. Because they have a lower glycemic index, yams are a good choice for avoiding insulin resistance.

Our sweet potato recipe is as follows: Wash Whole Sweet Potatoes. Poke with a fork several times to let heat escape, coat lightly with olive oil, bake on a cookie sheet (you can cover sheet with Reynolds wrap for easy clean up) for 20 minutes at 400 degrees. Cover with your favorite HEALTHY topping. Enjoy.

Tomatoes – This one is bittersweet for me. Tomatoes are obviously one of the top ten super foods and deservedly so are included on our list; however, I hate them raw or whole. Can’t even think about tasting them raw or I will begin to throw up in my mouth a little. And, in chili or soup, I will dig out the whole ones and pitch. So there’s an example of bio individuality and resistance to the form of a certain food. Now, cut those tomatoes and throw them in a Pico di Gallo with vinegar, changing the taste a bit and the texture and I’ll eat a bunch. Hypocritical perhaps, but honestly stated. Reason for mentioning this is because all of us have foods we just cannot stand for whatever reason. So, I say, stay away from the FORM of the food you hate, but don’t necessarily throw the entire food away. God gave us each fruit, vegetable, herb, mineral, vitamin etc., for a reason and he also gave us a brain. It’s our job to figure out how to make ourselves happy. And I digress, but one of the things that made me very happy was to throw just a few raw tomatoes at my brother while growing. Ok, maybe even more recently than that.

Tomatoes are tops over other fruits and vegetables for their content of lycopene and a wide range of other beneficial phytochemicals. These help to protect us against cancers, heart attacks and keep us strong and full of vigor as we age. Here’s our Caprese Insalada (tomato salad) recipe as borrowed from our friends at Kraft Foods (shout out to our Stockton peeps)

Two large red tomatoes, sliced , one half pound fresh Kraft Mozzarella Cheese, drained and sliced, one bunch of fresh basil leaves, three tablespoons olive oil, two tablespoons of red wine or balsamic vinegar, pinch of sea salt and my personal favorite herbes de provence (come get some at NHE)

Place tomatoes on plate, cover with cheese, whisk together all other ingredients and pour on top. Season to taste.

Walnuts- Feed YOUR brain. Ever notice walnuts look a little like your brain? Walnuts are becoming more and more popular as more “experts” are stating their knowledge of “good” fats. And good fats, not only help your digestion, but aid in the operation of your noggin. To these so called experts, I say, walnut trees have been around forever. Welcome to the party. Walnuts contain vitamin E, folate, thiamine, and riboflavin. They also contain the minerals magnesium, manganese and potassium. Walnuts are the only nut to contain a significant amount of ellagic acid, a cancer fighting anti-oxidant and at this time, we need all the cancer fighting agents we can muster. Walnuts, as do all of their family members, contain protein and fiber, but the walnut exclusively contains the highest amount of polyunsaturated fats, which again, helps to reduce LDL (la nasty) cholesterol and increase HDL (happy, happy) cholesterol. And of course, they contain Omega 3 fatty acids which are antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and great for the brain. So be smart, eat your walnuts.

Here’s a treat- purchase a bag of raw walnuts (or crack on your own if you have a tree) Place on cookie sheet at 350 degrees for 8-10 minutes. Lightly toasting brings out the flavor of all nuts (except of course the two legged version) Eat as is or sprinkle with your own creation.

This concludes our series on Super Foods. I hope you have enjoyed it. Please email me with topics you may be interested in for future articles and come see us. As always, we welcome your questions and comments.

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