

Fat Fighting Foods

The Foods That Burn Fat... And Why

by Sakura Oshio



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Chapter 1

Fat Fighting Foods

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your purchase of Fat Fighting Foods! The purpose of this guide is to show you delicious and nutritional foods you can eat that will help you lose weight. The Fat Fighting Foods guide also contains vital information on the nutrients in each food, and how the foods help you to stay healthy.

I've grouped each of the Fat Fighting Foods into food groups in order to help you plan your meals better. The concept of food groups his will be important for the Fat Fighting Food Combinations Chapter at the end of the book.

In each food group, I'll provide you with an overview of the food, then discuss in detail both the health benefits and Fat-Fighting benefits of that particular food. Finally, I'll give you ideas on how to prepare the food or how to look for it in markets, how long it will keep, specifics to preparation like peeling, soaking, eating raw, and other cooking tips.

I've also listed a few meal suggestions if you're stuck for ideas, but of course, no book can completely cover every possible recipe idea, and this certainly is not a cookbook.

The idea behind this book is that you recognize your Fat Fighting Food choices and to help you put the ingredients together in healthy, delicious and fat burning meals.

After reading this book, I suggest you experiment by switching some of your regular food choices with the Fat Fighting Foods, for example substituting healthy fats (olive oil, for instance) for unhealthy fats (like butter, or lard). This is good prac-

tice for your long-term health and figure because the more you switch your regular food choices for Fat Fighting Foods, the more weight you will lose!

Once you look over the various chapters on foods, you can experiment with combining the food groups for maximum weight loss. I've created an optional chapter on Food Combinations especially for this purpose. The Fat Fighting Food Combinations is a weight loss plan for people who want to lose weight as quickly as possible with the Fat Fighting Foods.

I say its optional because the Fat Fighting Foods are so powerful that eating a diet that's rich in the foods listed in this guide is the key to losing weight safely, and giving your body all the nutrients it needs to stay healthy and maintain a healthy weight. The Fat Fighting Food Combinations simply accelerate the weight loss process.

Good luck - and enjoy the delicious Fat Fighting Foods! For the latest updates, visit www.fatfightingfoods.com/updates/

Chapter 2

Fat Fighting Foods

FRUITS

Apples

Apples really are one of nature's most perfect foods. The fact that there are so many delicious types and varieties of apples means you can't go wrong in terms of taste. You'll never get bored, in other words. There are countless recipes featuring fresh apples, so you'll always have something new and delicious to prepare – or consume by yourself.

Apples, which are fruit, are actually of the rose family. They are the second most valuable fruit in the United States (the first being oranges) and come in more than 2500 varieties in the United States alone. More than 7500 varieties of apples are grown worldwide. The apples most popular in America include Red and Golden Delicious, Fuji, Gala and Granny Smith. Other varieties, such as Newton Pippin, date to the time of Benjamin Franklin, and were the first apples exported from the USA. The oldest apples are the Lady or Api variety. Of course, everyone's heard of George Washington and his apple tree. The fact of the matter is, pruning his apple trees was one of George's favorite hobbies.

Their colors range from red, to yellow to green and they can be as small as cherries or as large as grapefruit. The flavor of an apple may be tart, tangy or sweet. Each apple contains five carpels, or seed pockets. In each pocket are a number of seeds, depending on the plant's overall health and the particular variety of apple. And apples are most nutritious when eaten raw, with the skins attached.

Apple's Fat Fighting Benefits

Apples are fat-free, cholesterol-free and also free of sodium. The crunchy, crisp nature of the apple fruit makes chewing apples both delicious and satisfying. And they contain pectin, a fiber which is extremely beneficial to weight loss. One medium-size apple has about five grams of fiber and contains only about 80 calories. Fiber also grabs onto toxins and helps flush them out of your system. They are an excellent choice for liver cleansing as well.

The apple's fiber content and the fact that it is low energy density make the fruit an ideal candidate for weight loss. Fiber prolongs the digestion of food as well as helps stabilize blood-glucose levels in your body. What does this mean in real terms? It means that you'll feel full longer and won't have craving for food before you need to.

And even though apples are a naturally sweet fruit, they don't contribute to a spike in the body's insulin levels. That's because they have a healthy, low glycemic carbohydrate load. What this means is that an apple will slowly transform into blood sugar in the body. Apples don't overreact to create too much insulin.

The skin of apples contains two-thirds of the fruit's antioxidants. That's why it's important to eat the skin of apples. Be sure to carefully wash the skin to remove any waxy substances. Buy only organic apples to eliminate any possibility of pesticides. The antioxidants in apples help reduce cell damage from free radicals. Free radicals in the human body prompt diseases to flourish.

How To Prepare Apples

Apples are best eaten raw, scrubbed, with the skins on. Make sure the apples are organic. If not, try to buy locally farmed apples. This is because commercially-grown apples may have been exposed to dangerous pesticides. You could eliminate this by peeling the skin, but you would be losing the valuable fiber and flavonoids the skin contains.

Look for apples that have a rich color, are free of bruises and spots and are firm. Apples will stay fresh when stored in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to six weeks, but don't let them go that long! Eat them!

Chop up apples to add to salads for a delicious taste. You can bake them, simmer them or braise them. They're so versatile!

How Much To Eat

One apple a day is about right. They're also the perfect portable snack and can be eaten anywhere, anytime.

Apricots

Apricots are a fruit that's smaller than a peach, with a flesh that's drier and an orange-yellow color. They are very delicate, with a velvety skin. There are more than 20 different kinds of apricots. These include the California Newcastle, of medium size, orange and with a freestone pit. There's also the English Moorpark, with its freestone pit and large, round orange-red in color. And the French Royal, with its yellow-red freestone, large and oblate size.

Did you know that the word apricot in Latin means "precious"?

Apricots are well known for their delicate, fresh taste. They are marketed in the United States as fresh as well as packed dried. Many are used for canning or jam making.

Apricots' Fat Fighting Benefits

Apricots are low fat, free of saturated fat, sodium-free, cholesterol-free and loaded with essential vitamins and nutrients.

Apricots are an excellent source of beta carotene. Just a single apricot provides the daily recommended allowance of Vitamin A. In the human body, beta carotene gets converted to Vitamin A. This essential vitamin protects skin, hair, gums and eyes and keeps them healthy. Vitamin A is also important for bone and teeth. Recent research has shown that Vitamin A also fights off infection by helping the body to maintain its immunity. With this result, there's much more research into the natural healing abilities of apricots.

There's a terrific amount of potassium in apricots – great for maintaining fluid balance in your body and for controlling blood pressure. One cup of sliced apricots contains 427 grams of potassium!

Apricots are also a good fiber source, with 3.3 grams per one cup of sliced fruit. Fiber helps you to feel full without overeating and also helps with digestion by providing bulk to speed away toxins from your system.

Vitamin C, a powerful antioxidant, is also present in good amounts in apricots, with 16.5 grams per one cup of sliced apricots. Vitamin C boosts your metabolism and helps you to burn fat. It's also an extremely potent agent that fights the damage done by free radicals in your body.

How To Prepare Apricots

When shopping for apricots, look for firm fruit that's evenly colored and shows no signs of bruising or cuts. To store unripe apricots, place in a paper bag at room temperature. You can refrigerate ripe apricots for up to one week in your refrigerator's crisper drawer.

Apricots are best eaten raw. You can eat them by themselves, as you would a peach, pear or plum. They're also wonderful sliced, added to a green salad. Add them to a fruit salad for a delicious taste treat.

The fruit makes a tasty surprise to wild rice and chicken, added to jello, with sliced peaches or other fruit. Add as a garnish to turkey or other main entrée.

In short, be creative! There are lots of ways to serve apricots. Think of them as another delicious fruit you can eat whenever you're hungry for some naturally sweet-tasting and nutritious fat burning foods.

How Much To Eat

Eat one cup of sliced apricots per serving.

Berries

Blueberries

Native to North America, blueberries have been cultivated and grown since Native Americans sun-dried them and smoked them for storage over winter months. Historical anecdotes claim that the USA's colonists boiled blueberries in milk to make the gray paint they used on their dwellings. And the blue of Shaker buildings similarly came from a mixture of blueberries, indigo and sage mixed with milk.

Blueberries are one of the USA's most well-liked fruits, and rank just behind strawberries as the United States most favorite berry. In North America, blueberry production accounts for approximately 90% of the world's blueberry production.

Blueberries may be the size of a pea, all the way up to the size of a dime (and some giant ones are even larger). Wild blueberries are generally smaller in size. The fruit has a great number of tiny seeds that are almost unnoticeable. Most blueberries are very blue, almost blue-black.

Blueberries' Fat Fighting Benefits

But the best news is that blueberries are a terrific source of antioxidants like anthocyanine and phenolics that fight the damage of free radicals in your body and aid in burning fat. The compound anthocyanine in the blueberry (that gives it the dark blue color) is thought to be the key to blueberries' antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. They're also loaded with Vitamins C and K, potassium, calcium, magnesium and phosphorus.

Blueberries are loaded with arginine, which plays a very important role in helping to maintain the body's cellular energy and helps combat obesity.

High in cellulose, blueberries easily satisfy your appetite so you don't overeat.

Vitamin C in the blueberries helps to stimulate the body's production of carnitine, which is an amino acid that really jumpstarts your metabolism.

Blueberries are also a low glycemic carbohydrate that gently and slowly transforms into sugar, and not precipitously high enough to increase insulin.

Did you know that blueberries are actually a relative of the cranberry? And blueberries are a great source of tannins, which help not only to cleanse the digestive system but also to prevent bacterial growth in the urinary tract.

A cup of blueberries is low in calories, only about 80 calories, high in fiber with about 5 grams fiber per cup serving. Fresh, raw blueberries are fat-free, cholesterol-free, sodium-free and a delicious tasty snack at any time of the day or night.

Strawberries

The most popular berry in the United States, strawberries have been around for many thousands of years in worldwide cultures. In fact, they date back to the Greeks and Romans as far as consumption. They've been actively cultivated since 1624. In America, cultivation began in the 1800s along the East Coast. They moved West with the pioneers. This strawberry predominance in the West continues today with a high concentration of strawberries grown in California (although many are also grown in Florida). There are more than 70 varieties of strawberries today.

Strawberries, which are actually a member of the rose family, are the first fruit to ripen in the spring. Although they're not technically a berry, since they do not grow from a flower's ovary, but instead from the plant's base, they're considered a berry for nutritional purposes – and consumer preference.

Strawberries are a small, ground-grown fruit. They are the only fruit with seeds on the outside. Each strawberry contains an average of 200 seeds. Look for berries that are bright red in color. Check to ensure the caps on the berries look fresh and green. If you buy strawberries that are yellow or green, it means they are not ripe. If you eat them that way, they will taste sour. The naturally sweet taste and ripe red lusciousness of strawberries make them a favorite for people of all ages. Strawberry festivals further popularize this delicious fruit. About 94% of U.S.

households consume strawberries and 54% of children ages 7-9 say strawberries are their most favorite fruit.

Strawberries' Fat Fighting Benefits

Strawberries are non fat, low calorie, high in fiber and folic acid, and loaded with Vitamin C and potassium. Vitamin C stimulates your metabolism, while potassium helps control blood pressure. In fact, strawberries contain the most Vitamin C of all the berries. They are also free of sodium and cholesterol. The natural fructose in the berry is what makes it taste sweet – and curb hunger cravings.

One serving (about 8 medium strawberries or one cup) contains only 50 calories and no fat grams.

They have sufficient fiber (pectin) so that when you eat them, you're likely to feel full, and thus not consume additional calories in other foods.

The berries also contain the phytonutrient anthocyanine, which gives the fruit its rich and dark red color. Anthocyanine benefits your body further by helping the liver to break down toxins and flush them away.

Strawberries are also an excellent source of phenylalanine, an amino acid that releases cholecystokinin (CCK), a hormone in the human body that works to control appetite. With the release of CCK into the body, hunger and appetite are suppressed. Strawberries also contain tryptophan, which reduces sugar cravings.

Glycine, another important amino acid present in strawberries, helps to produce bile salts which the body needs for the digestive process, particularly fat digestion. Glycine also helps insulin to stabilize the body's blood sugar levels. Isoleucine, leucine and valine (the so-called branch chain amino acids or BCAAs) are three more amino acids found in strawberries that help with low blood sugar. They are also primary in muscle tissue mass maintenance.

Threonine helps with digestive processes and disorders. Methionine helps the body maintain fluid balance.

Strawberries contain arginine, which helps control obesity. Arginine's role is critical in helping the body to maintain its cellular energy.

And strawberries are a rich in ellagic acid, which offers multiple benefits including protection of your cells against cancer.

Blackberries

Blackberries grow throughout the world. They've been called several names including brambleberries and brumblekites and lavers. There are two different types, the North American and European varieties, with the North American ones ripening earlier in the summer. Most blackberries contain thorns, although there are newer varieties that are thornless.

Blackberry hybrids include loganberries, boysenberries and ollalieberries. These are tarter tasting berries that are generally used in pie making.

Blackberries' season runs from July to the beginning of October. They are dark purple to black in color (although there are yellow, dark red and blue colors as well), long and slender, with hard seeds. They grow in droplets and have white blooming flowers. Blackberry bushes are called brambles. These bushes can last for 15-20 years. Consider this as a rule of thumb: the darker the color, the sweeter the fruit. They are a very tasty berry!

Blackberries' Fat Fighting Benefits

One cup of blackberries (about 140 grams), contains about 62 calories, according to the USDA. This amount provides half of your daily supply of Vitamin C, 32% of fiber, 9% of folic acid, 5% of iron and 4% of calcium.

Blackberries are also high in antioxidants, the natural substances found in plants, which offer the human body protection by neutralizing the effect of free radicals. Blackberries also boost your immune system, slow down aging, and help to improve memory, coordination and motor skills and balance.

The berries are ultra rich in potassium to control blood pressure, Vitamins A and C that stimulate your metabolism and have about 46 mg of calcium per cup serving.

Blackberries are another low glycemic carbohydrate that you can eat without fear of spiking your insulin. This is because they only turn into sugar in your body at a very slow rate. This makes them an idea food for fat burning.

Raspberries

It is most likely that raspberries had their origin somewhere in Eastern Asia. It is said that the Crusaders wrote poems about the fruit on their way into Jerusalem. It wasn't until the 17th century that the fruit became popular. But the taste and flavor soon caught on. By the 1800s, cooks and culinary masters were adept at devising all sorts of recipes for wines, vinegars, jams, jellies and sweets.

Raspberries have long been considered a cure for sore eyes and sore throats, and to cleanse teeth.

The fruit is commercially grown for two markets: processing and fresh market. It used to be that raspberries were only a late summer crop but with the many varieties now cultivated, raspberries are available from mid-April through December. There are over 200 raspberry species cultivated.

Raspberry fruit is yellow, red, orange, purple or black. The wild red and black raspberries are the ones most cultivated. Purple is actually a cross between the black and the red, while yellow is a mutated red variety. Raspberries grow as perennials through an underground root system and crown. The canes from underground buds are biennial. This means that the primocanes appear in the first year and the floracanes appear in the second year.

Raspberries' Fat Fighting Benefits

High in antioxidants, potassium, Vitamin C and dietary fiber, raspberries taste great and make you feel satisfied.

Antioxidants prevent damage by free radicals, help you to guard against aging and cancer.

Potassium provides wonderful protection for your blood pressure.

Vitamin C is the super fuel to gas your metabolism into high momentum.

One half pound of raspberries a day provides 20-30 grams of fiber! The USDA lists raspberries as having about 64 calories per one cup serving.

Black raspberries are called “black caps,” and are native to North America.

Raspberries have no sodium, cholesterol or fat at all. They’re a perfect fruit to get your metabolism into high gear, add variety to your daily food intake, taste delicious, offer fantastic nutritional benefits and turbocharge your fat burning process.

How To Prepare Blueberries, Strawberries, Blackberries And Raspberries

Eat blueberries, strawberries, blackberries and raspberries raw for the highest nutrients and fat-burning abilities. Organic varieties are the best. Due to their short shelf life, you should only buy enough to eat within a few days if you want them at their absolute freshest. As an alternative, you can freeze berries.

Look for blueberries that are firm and dry with the skin smooth and a nice, deep purplish blue color. They have a protective light powdery coating on them and will generally tend to last longer than other berries. Although blueberries can be stored in the refrigerator for about 10-14 days, they’re best eaten fresh (within one week). You can also freeze them by first placing them on a cookie sheet in a single layer and place in the freezer. When they’re solid, put them in a plastic bag. This way you can buy blueberries when they’re in season and reasonable in price and enjoy them long afterwards. Blueberries are available for 8-9 months of the year.

Strawberries should only be washed in cold water when you are ready to use them. Do not allow them to soak. Berries can be stored for longer periods when

you leave the stems on (versus strawberries without the stems). First, remove any bruised and damaged berries and discard. Place unwashed berries in a container and cover them with a paper towel or paper napkin. Then turn the container upside down and put it in the refrigerator. The strawberries will remain fresh for days. To freeze, follow the same method as for blueberries.

You don't want to wash blackberries until you're ready to use them. If you wash them and then put them in the refrigerator, it will make them spoil faster. The caveat here is if you plan to freeze blackberries, wash them first and then freeze them immediately. Although blackberries are less perishable than blueberries or strawberries, even under the best conditions they'll only last about one week when refrigerated. Left on the counter at room temperature, they will mold very quickly. To freeze, wash berries, cut off the hulls and drop the fruit in a Ziplok bag (being careful to remove as much air as possible), and store in the freezer.

Blueberries, strawberries, blackberries and raspberries are great eaten by themselves, but you can also layer them with yoghurt for a delicious treat. Make smoothies with any of the berries and soy milk. You can even add protein powder for extra boost. Add berries to salads for a delightful and surprising taste!

They're also delicious juiced, baked in pies, made into jellies and jams, or even as marinate on organic meats and poultry. You can dehydrate them, or add to whole grain or granola for a delicious snack.

How Much To Eat

You should eat about one cup of blueberries, strawberries, blackberries or raspberries per serving. Mix them together (just be sure it's only one cup).

Cherries

Cherries today are grown on all five continents. Although there are more than 10,000 cherry varieties in the United States, only about 10 are commercially produced here. Four states (Washington, Oregon, Utah and Idaho) produce about 70% of U.S. cherry crops. This includes both sweet and sour types. The state of Michigan has over 35,000 acres devoted to tart cherry trees, and 75% of all tart

cherries produced in the USA come from Michigan. The state also has an annual cherry festival. The Cherry Capital of the World is a title bestowed upon Traverse City, Michigan.

Cherries come in sweet or sour types. The sweet ones are generally used for desserts and eating fresh, while the sour cherry is used primarily for baking, especially in pies. Both sweet and sour cherries can be made into preserves, jams or brandied. Sour cherries are also used in cooked fruit compotes, cherries jubilee, soufflés, clafoutis, flans and spirits (kirsch, eaux-de-vie).

Cherries are drupes (also known as stone fruits) and are related to plums. They are also more distantly related to nectarines and peaches.

Cherries' Fat Fighting Benefits

Cherries are loaded with Vitamins A, B and C, fiber and oodles of minerals, particularly potassium, iron and calcium.

Vitamin C is what your body needs in order to agitate your metabolism into momentum. If your metabolism is sluggish, guess what? You can't burn fat. So, it's vitally important that you make sure your body is ready to burn fat by getting it going. Think about how you feel first thing in the morning. A bit foggy, slow, not quite up yet. That's your body when it's in low metabolism mode. That's why it's absolutely necessary to have breakfast, to get things moving. Vitamin C in fresh fruits, like cherries, is the way to go.

Cherries are also rich in bioflavonoids and ellagic acid. And we know that ellagic acid has cancer protection properties as well as other health benefits.

Anthocyanin is an antioxidant present in cherries (it gives the cherry its dark red color) and helps control blood sugar levels with a boost in insulin.

The rich source of antioxidants in cherries is evident by their dark color. Darker cherries have more antioxidant properties than their red or yellow versions.

Cherries are a natural source of healthy low glycemic carbohydrates. This allows you to eat a delicious fruit that turns slowly to sugar in your body. It doesn't con-

tribute to an unhealthy load of insulin. Instead, you have the energy of the great-tasting fruit without the fear of insulin spike.

How To Prepare Cherries

Store cherries unwashed in a container in the deepest part of the refrigerator (this is usually near the back). Make sure to toss out any decayed or bruised ones prior to refrigerating since they will negatively affect all the other cherries. The fruit will stay fresh in for about one week.

Wash cherries when you're ready to eat them – not before!

You can eat cherries fresh – right out of your hand. They can be used in baking, cooking, making into jam and brandy. Dried cherries are a great snack and perfect additions to salads and cereal. Cherries also accent pork dishes, poultry and can be used as sauces and condiments. They're great over and in yoghurt, jello and smoothies or shakes.

To freeze cherries for use later, take off the stems and then wash and pat dry. You can freeze them with or without their pits, your choice. Place them on a cookie sheet individually and freeze flat. When they're frozen, transfer them to a plastic freezer bag and return to the freezer. They'll last for 10 months.

How Much To Eat

Generally speaking, you should eat about one cup of cherries in a serving. This amounts to about 10 cherries of fairly consistent size.

Cranberries

Cranberries are one of only a few fruits native to North America. The others include Concord grapes and blueberries. They are a tart tasting fruit, which needs to be cooked to be palatable.

There are four major Cranberry types: American, Highbush, Mountain and European. In the USA, the American cranberry is mentioned by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for use as fresh or juicing. It is a bright red color. Highbush is

mostly used for jams, jellies, sauces and ornamental decoration. European isn't often eaten in the USA and its use is mostly for ornamental purposes. Mountain, bright to dark red in color, is sometimes found in markets.

Cranberries' Fat Fighting Benefits

Cranberries are low-fat, cholesterol-free, sodium-free, and an excellent source of Vitamin C, with 13 grams per 100 grams of berries. Vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant that boosts your metabolism, fights off free radical damage to your body.

Cranberries are a powerful way to combat urinary tract infections. This is due to the tannins contained in the fruit. These bind to bacteria urinary tract walls so bacteria can't cause inflammation. These are extremely potent antioxidants that also help to maintain healthy kidneys and heart.

There's research that shows that extracts of chemicals in cranberries may prevent breast cancer formation. The current findings show this result in test animals, while human tests still remain to be proven. Drinking cranberry juice (fresh, not canned) daily may also increase your good levels of cholesterol, good HDL, while reducing bad cholesterol, or LDL.

Cranberries also have strong anti-inflammatory, anti-fungal and anti-viral capabilities.

How To Prepare Cranberries

Look for cranberries that are a bright to deep color and firm in texture. Avoid any that have brown spots or are shriveled. These will quickly turn neighboring cranberries bad. Since cranberries do not ripen after they are harvested, what you buy is what you will see later. You can store cranberries in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to two months.

You can also wash fresh cranberries and seal them in airtight bags that you freeze for up to one year. When you want to use them, don't thaw them out first. Since they're 90% water, thawing makes the fruit break down faster, turning them to mush. Just put them frozen right into your recipes.

You'll definitely want to cook your cranberries before you eat them – unless you like really tart taste! And when you cook, don't overcook the berries. Make sure to cook them only until they pop.

There are dozens of ways to prepare and serve cranberries, and they're not all about Thanksgiving turkey! Cranberry sauce and relish are great accompaniments to almost any poultry dish. Cranberries added to salads are a delicious taste treat. You can serve cooked and mashed squash with cranberries. Add cranberries to your favorite whole grain muffins. Add zip to whole grain pastas with a generous sprinkling of cranberries.

Try cranberry ice cream, cranberry balsamic vinaigrette for salads, cranberry with wild rice. Be adventurous! Experiment with new ways to serve the delicious cranberry!

How Much To Eat

About 100 grams, just 10 grams less than one cup, is a good serving of cranberries. Of course, if you add cranberries to a salad, you'll use far less.

Figs

Figs are one of nature's most perfect foods. Packed with vitamins and nutrients, along with fiber, they are a chewy taste treat with lots of flavor.

They're also an extremely versatile fruit. Portable, you can take figs anywhere and eat them anytime.

Figs – fresh figs – have a wonderfully sweet taste that's unlike any other. It's a delightful cross between that of a strawberry and a peach. Don't confuse a fresh fig's taste with a dried one. There's simply no comparison!

You can find figs in lots of different colors: purple, black, yellow, brown or red. In the United States, the most common varieties are the Brown Turkey and the Celeste, both of which are a golden yellow color when they're ripe.

Figs' Fat Fighting Benefits

Figs are a nutritious fruit. Actually, it's been said that man can live on just figs alone! I wouldn't recommend that, but the adage does point up the fact that the fruit is literally loaded with essential vitamins, nutrients and dietary fiber that you need on a daily basis.

They're fat-free, free of saturated fats, cholesterol-free and sodium-free. How great is that! They have abundant fiber, which helps digestion and also promotes elimination of toxins from the body. According to the National Cancer Institute, fiber in your diet may help to reduce the risk of various types of cancer as well. Another interesting fact about figs and nutritional benefits is that they contain more dietary fiber than any other common fresh (or dried) type of fruit.

They do have carbohydrates, which are provided in the form of natural fructose and glucose.

Did you know that one fig provides the same amount of calcium as a half cup of milk? Calcium, present in figs, is one mineral that is very often missing from most of our diets. It must be added. What better way to add calcium to your diet than a delicious fig? Calcium-rich figs are a terrific way to promote strong bones and teeth.

Figs also contain Vitamin C, which helps to boost your metabolism to burn fat. They have high concentrates of iron, phosphorus and potassium. Potassium helps to regulate your body's fluid balance and maintain stable blood pressure.

How To Prepare Figs

Figs will not ripen after they're picked. They must be picked ripe. So, when you're shopping for fresh figs, it's important to know the type of fig you're buying in order to know the right color to look for. As mentioned above, the most common figs in the U.S. are the Brown Turkey and the Celeste, both a yellow gold color when ripe. Other varieties include the California dark and sweet Mission and the Calimyrna, a slightly nutty flavored golden variety of fig.

Remember that figs don't last long when kept at room temperature. You can store them for several days after purchase in the refrigerator.

Figs are great when pureed and used as a substitute for fat in baking goods. They also hold in the moisture in the baked good dish.

When you cut figs, use a sharp knife (or a pair of kitchen scissors). To avoid the stickiness, run the knife under hot water to clean.

Fresh figs are best eaten as a dessert or starter appetizer. You can also make a delicious sorbet from mashed figs, lemon juice and a fat-free sweetener to taste.

You can make poached figs and blackberries. Add figs to fresh-baked scones. Make a chocolate cheesecake with a fresh fig crust.

Eat fresh figs just as they are! They're a delicious and nutritious taste treat!

How Much To Eat

Eat one medium sized fig (2-1/4 inches in diameter) at a time, about 50 grams. This is about one half cup of chopped fruit.

Grapes

Did you know that grape growing is the largest food industry in the world? There are more than 50 species and 9,000 varieties of grapes. Today, California leads the world in the production of both table and wine grapes.

Technically and botanically, grapes are berries.

In the United States, grapes are one of the most popular fruits, ranking 6th behind bananas, apples, watermelon, oranges and cantaloupe. Why? Because they taste great and they offer a fun way to eat. They pop and crunch in your mouth.

European versions have tight skins that cling to the fruit while the American ones have loose (or slip-skin) that easily removes from the fruit when you cut or bite it. The best-selling grapes in the USA are the Thompson seedless grapes. Grapes do not ripen or get sweeter after they are harvested.

Grape varieties are classified according to their use: table, raisin or wine. Table grapes have to conform to certain specifications for size, color and shape, be low

in acidity and sugar content. Raisin grapes have a high sugar content, low acidity and must be seedless. Do not consume raisins for fat burning due to their high sugar content. Wine grapes for table wine have a moderate sugar content and somewhat high acidity while dessert and sweet wine grapes have high sugar and moderate acidity.

Grapes' Fat Fighting Benefits

Grapes are low in saturated fat, low in cholesterol and low in sodium. They are high in Vitamin C and K. Their benefit for fat burning is due to their ability to satisfy hunger without drastically increasing blood sugar levels. Therefore, they are a good intermittent food to eat in your fat burning process. They also help your body to maintain optimum health.

One serving size (1 cup or 153 grams) has 104 calories, no fat, no cholesterol, and one gram of fiber.

Grapes have a relatively low glycemic carbohydrate load, making them a good choice when you want to ensure that your body converts the sugars moderately slowly.

Another fat burning benefit to consuming moderate amounts of grapes is their phytochemical composition.

Grapes main benefit involves its high antioxidant qualities. A Journal of Nutrition study reported that consumption of fresh grapes may even prevent harmful oxidized cholesterol accumulation in the body as well as prevent the development of atherosclerotic lesions. The antioxidants in grapes, called polyphenols, are thought to be the reasons for these beneficial effects.

There is one particular polyphenol contained in grapes, known as resveratrol, which is a known protector against the effects of bad cholesterol (LDL) on arterial walls. The resveratrol is found only in the grape skins, not the grape interiors. So, it's important to consume the skins of the grapes along with the rest of the fruit to obtain the maximum benefit of the antioxidants residing in the skins.

Grapes also contain tannin, which is absorbed directly into the intestinal tract and aids in digestion.

Grapes' ability to fight cancer is gaining even more acceptance. Numerous studies point out that this ameliorative and preventive effect seems to be due to the high levels of caffeic acid that grapes contain.

How To Prepare Grapes

The best way to eat grapes is to consume them fresh and raw. They're also fabulous additions to salads, like fruit salads (yummy!) and chicken salad.

Fresh grapes will last for 2-3 days in the refrigerator after purchase. You'll want to keep them in a covered container or a plastic bag. Don't wash them until you're ready to eat. When you wash, gently spray them with water, then drain and pat dry.

They're best served when they've been chilled. This will enhance their naturally crisp texture and wonderfully fresh flavor.

Eat seedless grapes whole, as is. For grapes with seeds, first remove the seeds by cutting them in half and scooping out the seeds.

You can also freeze grapes. Tray freeze them and then store in containers in the freezer.

Add grape puree to popsicle trays for a delicious frozen treat. Eat frozen grapes right from the freezer. Add fresh grapes as a garnish (leave the stems on as visual motif). Put grape halves into yoghurt, on top of cereal or muffins (whole grain).

How Much To Eat

A serving size of grapes is about one cup, or 151g.

Grapefruit

Production of grapefruit worldwide stands at about 6 million tons, with the United States producing some 60%. The state of Florida alone produces about one-third of worldwide grapefruit production.

In the States, more than 20 different varieties of grapefruit have been propagated. There are yellow-pulp versions (yellow and white) and pink-pulp varieties (pink and red). There are three main types of grapefruit: white, pink/red and Ruby/Rio. All are sweet-tasting fruit.

Grapefruits' Fat Fighting Benefits

Grapefruit is low in saturated fat, low in calories, cholesterol and sodium. It is sweet and juicy and extremely satisfying. This makes them ideal for those who wish to burn fat and enjoy what they're eating in the process.

An excellent source of Vitamin C, with about 69% of the recommended minimum daily amount, grapefruit is also a good source of inositol and Vitamin A.

Grapefruit provides about 250 mg of potassium, along with pectin, a soluble fiber that effectively lowers your levels of cholesterol.

In order to get the maximum benefit of the fiber, you should eat the membranes that separate the fruit, since the membranes are where the fiber is most concentrated. One half of a grapefruit provides 6 grams of fiber. Of this amount, half is insoluble fiber (which works to ward off constipation and also to minimize the risk of cancer of the colon) and the other half is soluble fiber (which helps lower cholesterol). Even if you only eat the fruit and not the membrane, you're still getting 2 grams of fiber from your one half grapefruit.

One contraindication is that people taking certain medications, such as antihistamines (Seldane), immunosuppressants (cyclosporine), sedatives (such as Halcion), calcium-channel blockers (including Ardalat or Procardia), or estrogens (like Estinyl), should not eat grapefruit. Check with your doctor about grapefruit interaction with any medications you've been prescribed.

Grapefruit also contains aspartic acid, which assists the liver to remove excess ammonia and toxins from the bloodstream. Aspartic acid also helps in the body's construction of other amino acids and biochemicals during the entire citric acid cycle.

The fruit contains glutamic acid, which is important in the metabolism of both sugars and fats and also helps transport potassium across the blood-brain barrier. Glutamic acid also fuels the cells lining the intestines.

Isoleucine and leucine are also present in grapefruit. These benefit fat burning by helping the body to regulate blood sugar.

Methionine helps the body break down fats, assists the digestive system and removes heavy metals from the body by increasing the flow of bile and damaging toxins away from the liver. Methionine's antioxidant properties further help it to inactivate free radicals in the body.

How To Prepare Grapefruit

Choose grapefruit that are heavy-feeling, round, smooth and with glossy skin. Don't pick any that have brown or soft spots as this indicates they are not at optimum freshness. You can store in the refrigerator for up to 8 weeks or on the counter for about a week. Do not freeze grapefruit.

Grapefruit is delicious all by itself, cut in half and eaten with a spoon. You can also peel it like an orange and eat it that way. Remember to eat the membranes separating the fruit, as this is where the most fiber is contained.

You can also section grapefruit and add to salads, green or fruit.

If you take medications, mention them to your doctor and ask about eating grapefruit or drinking grapefruit juice, since grapefruit affects (speeds up) the absorption of certain medicines in your body.

How Much To Eat

Eat one half to one whole grapefruit daily.

Kiwi Fruit

In the USA, California is the only state that produces Kiwi fruit.

There are actually two types of Kiwi fruit: the green and the gold. The green Kiwi fruit has tiny black seeds inside surrounded by bright green flesh and a white center that's creamy, fuzzy brown skin outside. The gold variety is similar to the green Kiwi's taste, but has the addition of a mango-like flavor. The outside, however, has no fuzz, although the skin is the same brownish color.

Kiwi fruit is available year-round: California Kiwi fruit from November to May, Kiwi fruit from Chili from April through November and New Zealand Kiwi fruit from June through December.

Kiwi Fruit's Fat Fighting Benefits

Kiwi fruit is one of nature's most nutrient-dense fruits. Low in fat, high in fiber and antioxidant-rich Vitamin C, Kiwi fruit is free of saturated fat and also cholesterol-free and sodium-free.

The fruit is also a good source of potassium that helps regulate blood pressure and Vitamin E.

The fiber in Kiwi fruit ensures that you'll feel fuller without consuming too much food.

The Kiwi fruit also contains various amino acids like aspartic acid and glutamic acid that help with fat metabolism, fuels cells in the intestine and transports potassium. Kiwi fruit has leucine that also helps regulate blood sugar levels, and methionine which helps in the breakdown of fat and with the digestive process.

How To Prepare Kiwi Fruit

Select fruit with no bruises, discolorations or spots that seem soft. Make sure they're firm and allow them to ripen at home for about 3-5 days. You'll know when a Kiwi fruit is ripe when it's plump and slightly soft (but not mushy) to the touch with a nice, light and fragrant smell.

You can also store ripe Kiwi fruit in the refrigerator for up to seven days. For longer storage, store unripened fruit in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to two weeks. Remember that Kiwi fruit emits a gas (ethylene), so if you put them near apples, pears or bananas, this will speed up ripening. Alternatively, put them in a bag with those fruits for 2-3 days if you do want to hasten ripening.

Can you eat the fuzzy outside skin? Absolutely! It's very thin and only needs a thorough rinsing with warm water and gently patted dry. You can cut into quarters, like an orange, or you can peel the skin away. First, cut off the top and bottom, and then use a vegetable peeler to remove the outer skin.

You can eat Kiwi fruit alone as a snack or put slices in fruit salads or on top of cereal. Any meal can be garnished with sliced Kiwi fruit. Did you know you can even use Kiwi fruit as a meat tenderizer? The enzyme Actinidin in Kiwi fruit works to tenderize the meat. Just cut the fruit in half and rub on the meat and allow it to stand for 10-15 minutes.

And this same Actinidin enzyme also breaks down the protein in dairy products such as yogurt, sour cream or low-fat ice cream. Kiwi fruit also works as a great salsa additive to serve on top of meat.

Kiwi fruit is delicious in a fruit salad with oranges, apples, banana and pineapple juice.

How Much To Eat

Eat one medium to one large fruit, whole or in slices.

Lemons

Lemons are a fruit that are cultivated in tropical and subtropical areas of the world, but particularly in Portugal, Spain, Italy and California in the United States. There are two types of lemons: sweet and acid. Home gardeners usually grow the sweet type, while the acidic variety is grown commercially. Lemon trees constantly bloom, and can produce 600-1,000 lemons a year.

The lemon is pale yellow on the outside, and shaped like an elliptical. It usually has a small nub at the end where it attached to the tree. The skin is leathery and contains oil, used in flavoring and perfumes. The pulp inside consists of 8-10 segments that each contain seeds that are pointed and yellow-white. There are even some seedless lemon varieties.

Thin-skinned fruit usually has more juice, while those with a greenish tint to the skin are more acidic. In one medium lemon, you'll get approximately three table-spoons of juice and the same amount of grated peel.

Lemons' Fat Fighting Benefits

Lemons are high in Vitamin C, also known as ascorbic acid. Vitamin C helps maintain a healthy immune system, neutralized free radicals and helps prevent LDL (bad cholesterol).

They also contain numerous citrus flavonoids and phytochemicals that benefit our bodies by protecting them from disease. Bioflavonoids have anti-inflammatory and abilities to inhibit blood clots.

Lemons contain folate, which lowers homocysteine in the body. Potassium in lemons helps lower blood pressure and also protects against stroke.

Fiber in lemons helps keep your blood sugar under control. Fiber also helps to lower cholesterol levels, makes you feel full on less calorie intake.

Lemons are juicy, satisfying, and low in saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium. They are high in fiber, Vitamin C, Vitamin B-6, potassium, calcium, copper, riboflavin, thiamin, Pantothenic acid, iron and manganese.

To maintain optimum health and jumpstart your fat burning process, add lemons to your daily diet!

How To Prepare Lemons

Lemons should be firm with bright yellow skin. Avoid fruit that's soft or has spots. They should feel heavy for their size.

Store lemons at room temperature for up to two weeks or up to six weeks in a plastic bag you keep in the refrigerator. You should use lemons as quickly as you can after you cut them.

Lemons are delicious to juice for lemonade. They are also a great way to jazz up a glass of filtered water. Just cut a slice or two and place in the water for a refreshing drink.

Replace salad dressing with a few teaspoons of freshly squeezed lemon juice. It's delicious and has much less sodium.

Lemon juice sprinkled over steamed vegetables is great, too!

You can even freeze lemon juice in ice cube trays to use later.

Use lemon juice in your next sorbet (instead of other fruit).

Grated lemon zest goes wonderfully in many recipes, including sauces, fruit salads, baked goods and other desserts. Lemon is a fantastic marinade for chicken and fish.

How Much To Eat

One medium to large lemon (or juice) is just about right any day.

Limes

Limes are a tropical fruit that is closely related to lemons. Today, 90% of Key limes are grown in Mexico and Central America, as well as Texas and California.

The large, green and seedless fruit you see in your neighborhood supermarket is larger than Key limes, and is most likely the Persian or Tahiti variety. The supermarket lime is more disease resistant and has a much thicker rind. Packaged while they are still unripe, the Persian limes turn yellow-green when they ripen. Don't confuse them with lemons!

Key limes are very abundant worldwide, and they are smaller, a little larger than a walnut in size, with a thin rind of yellowish color and brown spots and containing

seeds. They are very juicy, with a juice content over 40%, taste more sour (but fantastic in Key lime pie!) and grow on thorny trees very sensitive to temperature extremes.

Limes' Fat Fighting Benefits

Both types of limes – Key and Persian – have a higher citric acid and sugar content than lemons. In fact, limes are the most acidic of all citrus fruits. Yet they are still chock full of Vitamin C and bioflavonoids.

Limes are an essential part of any healthy diet, especially to those of us concerned with fat burning.

Their potassium content helps to regulate blood pressure. And they're also high in Vitamin A.

Limes are fat-free, cholesterol-free, low in calories (only about 20 calories per average size fruit) and a terrific source of needed fiber. As you know, fiber is what makes you feel fuller faster. You want fiber!

The fruit also contains micro-nutrients and phytochemicals. Limes, along with other citrus fruits, may offer protection against infections, cancer and other diseases.

Did you know that pure lime juice also has very powerful anti-bacterial properties? It can be an effective treatment when applied to cold sores.

The amino acid, methionine, in limes helps with the body's breakdown of fats. It also assists with digestion and removal of heavy metals from the body. This is because methionine can be converted to cysteine (a glutathione precursor), and is of vital importance for liver detoxification. Methionine, a sulfur-supplying amino acid, also is a great antioxidant that destroys free radicals. Finally, methionine increases bile flow and speeds cell-damaging toxins out of the liver.

How To Prepare Limes

The best way to prepare limes is to use them fresh and raw. Their easily squeezed juice to sprinkle over salad greens instead of dressing. You can add lime slices

to filtered water for a delicious and refreshing taste treat. You can add the juice to ice cube trays and make your own lime ice cubes. Lime popsicles are a delicious treat as well!

Use lime juice as a marinade for chicken, poultry and fish. Ceviche marinade for fish calls for limes. Limes are also added to stews for extra flavor. Try a great salsa recipe with limes! Limes are a key ingredient in many North African, South American and Spanish cuisines.

Limes are delicious added to lots of beverages and make great limeade. Add pin-wheel lime slices to carbonated beverages and to iced tea.

Dress vegetables with lime juice instead of butter for a delicious tasty change.

Make a delicious and nutritious Key lime pie. Add limes to sorbets you make yourself, and to jams.

You should look for light yellow, finely grained rinds that look almost like expensive leather. If you find the skins hard or starting to shrivel, don't buy those limes!

You can store fresh limes for a maximum of two weeks, although frozen lime juice does keep well for about three months. Stay away from bottled lime juice! Why buy bottled juice, which lacks all the freshness and nutrition of freshly squeezed limes? There is simply no reason not to buy fresh limes, available year-round.

How Much To Eat

One medium to large lime at a time is the appropriate amount. You can easily consume this during the day, with lime slices to drinks, to add zest to salads or other recipes.

Melons – Cantaloupe, Casaba, Honeydew

Melons, eaten as a fruit, are actually in the same family as gourds like squashes and cucumbers. Their structure is like that of the winter squash, a thick outer skin and lots of seeds in the interior midsection. The reason that melons are considered fruit is because of their sweet flavor that's loaded with juice.

There are several kinds of melons, the most popular of which are the cantaloupe, casaba and honeydew varieties.

Cantaloupe, also called muskmelon or mushmelon, has the most beta carotene of all the melons. It has an orange flesh and khaki-colored outer skin with thick netting. Cantaloupe is available year-round, with a peak season of June through August.

Casaba melons are pale yellow skin, white flesh and a sweet taste. They have no scent. You can find Casaba melons in the market beginning in July and lasting through December.

Honeydew is the sweetest tasting of all the melons. It has a creamy yellow rind and pale green flesh inside. These melons are available all year, but their peak season is June through October.

There are also the Crenshaw, Persian, Sharlyn and Santa Claus melons.

The Crenshaw is actually a hybrid, a cross between a Persian and Casaba. These melons have a salmon-colored flesh and yellowish skin. The flavor is sweet and spicy at the same time. Crenshaw melons can weigh as much as ten pounds. Peak season for Crenshaw is August through September.

Persian melons are slightly larger than the cantaloupe with fine netting on the outside skin. The season for Persian melons begins in June and ends in November.

The Santa Claus melon, also known as the Christmas melon, looks like a watermelon but the flesh isn't as sweet. Its season is – you guessed it – at its peak in December.

The Sharlyn melon has a greenish orange rind, white flesh and a taste that's a combination of cantaloupe and honeydew at the same time. Availability of Sharlyn is spotty, so check with your local market.

Melons' Fat Fighting Benefits

Melons are low in fat and saturated fat, low in sodium, and very low in cholesterol. They're an excellent source of Vitamin A, Vitamin C and potassium. Melons are also rich in dietary fiber, folate, Vitamin B-6 and niacin.

The calories in melon comes from the natural sucrose and fructose in the fruit.

Cantaloupe, in particular, is an excellent source of Vitamin A, due to its beta carotene content. Vitamin A is excellent for enhancing vision and preventing cataracts. It also aids in preventing cancer and the damage that cancer causes to cells, according to extensive research.

The Vitamin C content of melons works as powerful antioxidant – to scavenge the free radicals before they can do damage to your body. Vitamin C also stimulates your body's cells to fight off infection, kills a lot of bacteria and viruses and even revitalizes Vitamin E after free radicals have caused the vitamin to become inactive! The nutrient Vitamin C is also associated with a reduced risk of death from stroke, cancer and heart disease. This may be due to their anti-clotting action on the blood.

Potassium, Vitamin B-6, folate, niacin and dietary fiber in melons are excellent sources for the production of energy by metabolizing carbohydrates and stabilizing blood sugar levels. So, the sugars in melons are gradually introduced into the body, maintaining even blood sugar levels.

Potassium in melons offers many benefits. These include the regulation of cell pressure (inside and outside cells). Without sufficient potassium, toxins are left inside cells that cause them to wither and die. Potassium also converts blood sugar to glycogen which is then stored in the muscles and liver. Without enough glycogen, your body feels physically and mentally fatigued. Potassium also maintains enzyme efficiency and functioning. It stimulates insulin production, maintains proper pH blood balance and body water balance. And potassium relaxes muscle contraction that calcium causes. So potassium maintains the balance between muscle contraction and calcium. Potassium also maintains optimal muscle function of the optical nerve.

Foods rich in potassium help to maintain blood pressure levels, as well as reduce high blood pressure.

Melons have high water content. This helps speed elimination of toxins from the body.

How To Prepare Melons

Look for firm, solid melons that feel heavy for their size. Avoid those with bruises, cracks or obvious soft spots. They should have a clean break at the end and most will have a delightful fruity aroma (except for Casaba, which doesn't have any aroma).

Melons are great as a snack, an appetizer, part of a fruit salad and many other delicious ideas. You can add melon to cold fruit soups for texture and taste as well as visual appeal. How about melon kebabs? These are a great way to entice your kids to eat their daily recommended allowance of fruit.

Fruit salsa with diced melon is wonderful. Or serve melon slices with yogurt for breakfast.

You can mix melons with either a seafood or chicken salad for a tasty surprise.

Iced melons, melon boats, melons served with a scoop of low-fat or fat-free ice cream or sorbet are also good ideas for serving.

Before you eat a melon, make sure to thoroughly wash the outside skin in warm, soapy water. This is to ensure that you remove any residue of impurities that may carry from the knife to the cut flesh of the melon. Cut the melon in half and scoop out the seeds (and stringy parts) with a tablespoon and discard. Cut melons into wedges, cubes, halves, quarters or scooped into melon balls. You can sprinkle with a bit of lemon or lime juice to really bring out their flavor.

Serve at room temperature for the best taste.

As for storing melons, uncut ones will ripen when kept for 2-4 days right at room temperature. Then you can store them in the refrigerator for up to five days. Once

you've cut them, however, you need to refrigerate them in a tightly closed container. They'll last about three days.

How Much To Eat

Cantaloupe is most commonly eaten as a wedge (about 1/8 of a medium melon), you can also eat a cup of cubed cantaloupe. The wedge is about 89 grams, cubes about 160 grams. Casaba in one cup of cubed pieces is 170 grams. A wedge of honeydew melon is 125 grams (1/8 of a 5-1/4" melon) or one cup of diced pieces is 170 grams.

Nectarines

Nectarines are a fruit, actually a variety of peach without the fuzziness. The fruit is not a cross between a peach and a plum, however. They have a smooth skin, juicy, peach colored flesh and a pockmarked pit. Their outer skin is much darker orange than a peach.

Did you know that peach seeds may grow into trees that produce nectarines? And nectarine seeds may grow into trees that produce peaches? The way that growers ensure their trees produce nectarines is to graft branches of nectarines onto their peach trees!

California nectarines are available May through September, while imported nectarines are in the markets from January through April.

The most common variety of nectarine is the freestone. This means that the pit removes easily. There are about 10 hybrids grown for the market, including the midsummer Sun Grand and the late season (September) Grand.

Nectarines' Fat Fighting Benefits

Nectarines are low-fat, free of saturated fat, cholesterol-free and sodium-free. They are a good source of Vitamin C and fiber.

Vitamin C helps to stimulate your metabolism to burn fat. Fiber helps to make you feel fuller without consuming as much food, and also helps to rid your body of toxins by speeding them away.

The fruit is an excellent source of beta carotene, flavonoids, potassium and natural sugars.

Potassium helps to regulate blood sugar levels, blood fluid levels, maintains enzyme efficiency and function, helps regulate cell pressure levels to ensure longer cell life.

They are also loaded with the phytochemicals of lycopene and lutein, which help to prevent macular degeneration, heart disease and cancer.

How To Prepare Nectarines

Nectarines, like peaches, plums and pears, are best eaten raw and fresh. You can also add them to salads.

When shopping for nectarines, look for fruit that's firm but not too hard, fairly large sized and a smooth skin that has no blemishes, cuts, bruises or mold spots. You can buy unripe fruit and let them ripen at home at room temperature for 2-3 days.

Ripe nectarines have a sweet smell that's most noticeable at room temperature.

Nectarines are great with low-fat ice cream, in sorbet, with yogurt. They are excellent in home-made tarts, cakes and pies.

Add them to your favorite whole grain cereal in the morning!

How Much To Eat

A serving size of nectarine is one medium size fruit (2-1/2" in diameter).

Oranges

Oranges and tangerines are actually a type of berry. Grown on trees, the fruit consists of several sections known as carpels, each of which contains seeds and lots of

juice cells. The skin is leathery and has many oil glands. Orange trees are always growing (evergreen), with glossy, oval leaves and white fragrant flowers.

Today, oranges are the largest citrus crop in the world with Brazil leading orange production. California and Florida are the two largest orange-producing states in the USA, accounting for 25 billion pounds of oranges yearly. Texas and Arizona also grow oranges.

Oranges come in many varieties: navel, red navel, Valencia, pineapple, moro, abersweet, temple and hamlin. The most popular orange is the navel (for eating), while Valencia oranges are primarily used to make orange juice.

Tangerines are smaller in size than oranges, with a looser (easily peeled) peel. They're also characterized by the nub at the end. There are three major types of tangerines: tangerines, mandarins and tangelos. In fact, the word tangerine is a common name for a variety of mandarin orange.

Oranges' And Tangerines' Fat Fighting Benefits

Oranges are one of nature's superfoods. Fat-free, cholesterol-free, sodium-free, low in calories, how can you resist? They're also a great source of fiber, which makes you feel full without overeating. They're delicious, nutritious, easily portable and a great snack anytime.

Oranges contain a whole array of phytochemicals which may assist in preventing disease. They're loaded with Vitamin C which helps with healthy blood circulation, healing of wounds and other benefits. Eating one whole orange provides you with 130% of your recommended daily allowance for Vitamin C.

The ascorbic acid (Vitamin C) is also extremely important in your body's ability to manufacture collagen. Collagen is a protein that keeps your cells, muscles and bone connected. Ascorbic acid prevents bleeding gums, among other conditions.

Potassium in oranges helps to maintain proper fluid balance in your body and to help regulate blood pressure.

The pectin in oranges is a water-soluble fiber. And pectin helps reduce your levels of blood cholesterol.

The crucial B-vitamin folate is essential for fighting heart disease and birth defects.

Oranges' antioxidants help prevent free radical damage to the body. The effects of free radicals in the human body are incalculable, and oranges' natural ability to short-circuit free radicals also benefits fat burning.

How To Prepare Oranges And Tangerines

Oranges and tangerines are best eaten whole and raw. They're a perfect companion for anytime snacking.

Look for firm and colorful skin, fruit that's heavy for its size. Avoid bruised, spotted, wrinkled or shriveled fruit.

Store at room temperature or in the refrigerator (without any plastic bags) for about two weeks. You can freeze fresh squeezed orange juice, but not the whole orange or tangerine.

Besides eating whole or in orange juice, oranges and tangerines are very versatile. You can combine orange or tangerine wedges with other fruit to make a delicious fruit salad. Sprinkle orange or tangerine juice (or orange or tangerine zest, the grated peel part) in recipes, or rice dishes, for a tangy treat.

Oranges make a great tasting alternative to salad dressing when you sprinkle the juice over your greens!

Tangerine sections added to coleslaw or tuna salad make a very interesting and delicious recipe alternative your family (and you) will love.

How Much To Eat

Oranges and tangerines are one of the most portable and nutritious foods you can eat. Try for one orange or tangerine per day. Of course, you can juice oranges (several for one glass) as well.

Papaya

Papayas come from a tree that's actually an herb. Eaten as a fruit, the papaya is sweet and refreshing and a great way to get your daily recommended allowance of fruit!

There are two types of the popular fruit, papaya. These are the Hawaiian and the Mexican. You will most often find the Hawaiian version in the supermarket. They are called the Solo papaya, are shaped like a pear with yellow skin and bright orange or pink-tinged flesh. Mexican papayas are larger than Hawaiian and can weigh up to 20 pounds each! Their flavor is also less intense than the Hawaiian, but they're still delicious.

Papaya tastes like peaches and melons combined – a great tasting fruit!

Papaya's Fat Fighting Benefits

Papaya is rich in Vitamins A and C. It is low in calories, fat-free, cholesterol-free and a good source for your daily intake of potassium, fiber and folate.

Papaya's main benefit is its aid to natural digestion. The proteolytic enzyme papain in papaya helps to break down proteins, fats and starches in the human body and cleanses your digestive tract by removing protein residue. This is great for your fat burning regime since it means that less food settles into your metabolism to become fat. Papaya also helps to nourish your entire endocrine system.

The fruit is also known as a nutritional powerhouse, packed with the above-mentioned Vitamins A and C, folate, fiber and potassium, but also Vitamin E, the eye-essential lutein and zeaxanthin and lycopene. According to some nutritionists, papaya should be among the top three fruits that people regularly consume. They contain 50% more potassium than oranges with less calories, and about 13 times as much Vitamin C. And papayas have more Vitamin E than apples and oranges.

Papaya also helps your body to produce the amino acid, arginine, which activates a growth hormone responsible for cell rejuvenation in the muscles, liver and bones. Papaya juice is also beneficial for the skin, making it smooth and supple.

It's particularly effective for light-skinned persons and is often made into protective moisturizing creams which help to prevent premature aging.

Combined with pineapple juice, which contains another important enzyme, bromelain, and you've got a potent powerhouse.

Papaya is also thought to help reduce the risk of colon and cervical cancer.

How To Prepare Papaya

You can slice papaya and eat it raw. Or cut it into cubes (about one cup per serving). But it's best eaten with a meal (or other fruits and foods), than by itself. This is because it contains beta-cryptoxanthin, which is best absorbed by the body when eaten with fat.

You can mash papaya, or use it to make hot and spicy salsa. Blend it with yogurt, milk or orange juice for a delicious breakfast smoothie.

Puree papaya for use as a base for sorbet or ice cream. Or use pureed papaya as a nutritious salad dressing for your green salads.

Papaya slices or cubes make a great addition to a fruit salad: add honeydew, strawberries or other delicious fruits for a colorful, nutritious and delicious taste treat!

When shopping for papaya, look for fruit that's yellow (partially or completely). Make sure it yields slightly to finger pressure, but also make sure it's not soft at the stem end. Stay clear of fruit that's bruised, cut, and moldy, shriveled or has soft areas. If papayas are uncut, they'll have no aroma. That comes after they're cut, when they will smell sweet.

You can store green papayas to ripen at room temperature in a paper bag. Check often, however, as the fruit will ripen quickly. Once they're ripe, store papayas in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for about a week. The best bet is to eat the papayas right away (within a day or two) once they're ripe.

Papaya contains an enzyme called papain. This makes papaya excellent as a meat tenderizer.

You can also eat the papaya seeds. These taste a bit like pepper, and some folks use the seeds in place of black peppercorns.

How Much To Eat

One cup of cubed papaya is about right at 140 grams.

Peaches

There are two types of peaches: the clingstone and the freestone. Clingstone is just what it sounds like. The peach pit clings to the fruit. The freestone pit separates easily from the peach flesh. Most clingstone peaches go directly to the canneries, while freestones are what you find in the markets.

Peaches' Fat Fighting Benefits

Peaches make a perfect and perfectly portable snack. A medium size peach only contains about 35 calories and is an excellent source of potassium and Vitamins A, C and E.

Vitamin C helps stimulate your metabolism.

Potassium helps control your blood pressure.

Peaches are also loaded with fiber. And fiber helps prolong the digestion of your food and helps to stabilize your body's blood-glucose levels. You'll be satisfied eating less when you eat a peach.

Rich in phytochemicals which act as antioxidants, peaches also help get rid of roaming free radicals, preventing their damage to your body.

Peaches are not only a delicious fruit, but they're also fat-free, free of saturated fats, sodium-free, and cholesterol-free.

The fruit is high in aspartic acid, an amino acid that works to help the liver remove excess ammonia and toxins from the bloodstream. It's also high in glutamic acid, another amino acid that helps metabolize sugars and fats.

Did you know that peaches act as a natural aid for diurectic and laxative effects? They also assist in your digestive process – to speed things up. Again, this is a wonderful fat-burning process!

How To Prepare Peaches

Since peaches easily bruise, be careful when handling them. You can store unripe peaches in a paper bag to ripen, but be sure to lay them flat and not on top of each other in the bag. Ripe fruit can be stored in the refrigerator for about a week, depending on how ripe they are when you get them from the market. The best peaches are fresh from the market – or right off the tree! You can't beat the wonderful, fresh taste!

When you're ready to eat, wash peaches gently in cool and soapy water. You want to make sure to remove any residue of unwanted herbicides, pesticides or other contaminants. Even if you buy organic peaches, and we certainly recommend this, be sure to follow the same gentle, but careful, washing rules. Peaches are the number one fruit that's been found to be contaminated. Careful and thorough washing eliminates any health threat.

Washing is important for another reason as well. Most of the vitamins are contained in the skin, so it's important to eat the skin along with the fruit!

Peaches are so versatile, too. They can be used in all kinds of recipes and dishes. Layer them with yogurt in a parfait. Add them to other fruits in a fruit salad. Eat them on top of cottage cheese. How about a peach smoothie? Simply combine peaches with yogurt in a blender and, voila! You can also bake them, broil them or grill them along with your favorite main entrée of meat or fish.

Arrange slices of peach on top of Jello, or on an Angel food cake for dessert.

Experiment with this delicious fruit. You'll simply love the wonderful taste – and how you're contributing to your fat burning process!

How Much To Eat

Eat one medium size peach per serving.

Pears

Pears are a member of the rose family. As a fruit, they are comprised of about 20 species of trees. The pear today is cultivated in cool, temperate and humid regions worldwide.

The fruit is much juicier than an apple, and there's no need to peel the skin. Their shapes vary from teardrop to apple. Color ranges from light green and yellow to red and brown. The taste also varies in flavor from very sweet to tart or somewhere in between. Surely there's a pear to suit any taste!

In the United States, commercial pear production reaches 700,000 metric tons each year, with concentrated growing areas in California, Washington and Oregon. The Great Lakes and Northern states up to Canada also account for pear production.

Pears' Fat Fighting Benefits

Pears are a terrific source of fiber, in the form of pectin. Fiber is an essential part of the fat burning process, and is necessary for staying regular and sustaining blood sugar levels. Fiber also helps maintain an overall healthy body. By adding fiber to your daily food intake, you reduce the risk of colon cancer and reduce your serum cholesterol levels.

A medium size pear contains loads of potassium, 259 grams. Potassium is critical to maintaining protein and carbohydrate metabolism, heartbeat, muscle contraction and nerve transmission. Potassium is easily lost through dehydration and perspiration that occurs with strenuous exercise, so it's important to replenish potassium regularly. What better way than with a delicious pear!

Fresh pears contain Vitamin C, ascorbic acid, essential for repairing tissues, maintaining a normal metabolism, preventing damage from free radicals. Vitamin C also helps with wound healing and is a wonderful anti-inflammatory.

Pears that are fresh have no sodium, no saturated fat (which contributes to obesity and higher cholesterol), and no cholesterol.

The fruit has high amounts of fructose and glucose, which contribute to give your body great energy. They are a nutrient dense food. This means pears provide more nutrients per calorie than calories per nutrient.

Carbohydrates make up 98% of the energy you get from a pear. And carbohydrates in pears are helpful in both weight reduction and fat burning since they contain half the calories as fat.

How To Prepare Pears

The best time to purchase pears is from August to October, pears' peak harvest season. When you buy pears, remember that they are picked unripe and when you bring them home, allow them to stand for a few days to ripen before you eat them. Ripen pears by placing them in a brown paper bag for about 3-7 days. Once they're ripe, eat them right away or store them in the refrigerator. Ripe pears should be firm on the bottom, but still give a little on the stem part.

A really flavorful pear will have some brown speckling on the skin. This speckling is called russeting, and enhances the pear's flavor. But big, brown areas are bruises, so avoid those. A few cuts and nicks are okay, as long as they're not deep.

Make sure to wash pears well before you eat them.

Eat pears fresh, or bake or poach them. Make sure to eat the skins along with the flesh, as the skin contains an extraordinary amount of fiber in the form of pectin.

How Much To Eat

Eat one medium size pear per serving.

Pineapple

Pineapple is a delicious fruit that comes in four major varieties: Golden Supreme, the Cayenne from Hawaii, the Red Spanish from Puerto Rico and Florida, and the Sugar Loaf from Mexico.

The largest variety is the Cayenne, with long, sword-like leaves from a single sprout. The Red Spanish has a skin that's more reddish brown with leaves from

several tufts. The Sugar Loaf is a green-skinned pineapple. You rarely see it in the United States, however, since this variety does not ship very well from Mexico. The Golden Supreme variety is just what it sounds like, with a golden outer skin. It has extra sweet flavor.

The taste has some variations, depending on the fruit, but they all have a sweet, somewhat tangy flavor.

The Golden Supreme variety is one of the newer varieties of pineapple that have been introduced. These golden color fruits are exceptionally sweet in taste with little or no acidity or tartness. They are becoming very popular and are sold at a premium cost.

Pineapple's Fat Fighting Benefits

Pineapple that's fresh is loaded with Vitamin C – an essential nutrient for strength and overall health. It's also packed with calcium, fiber and potassium, and is low in fat and low in cholesterol.

Rich in the trace mineral manganese, pineapples help to strengthen bones by building bones and the connective tissues. Bone growth is essential for young persons and bone strengthening is important for the elderly.

Did you know that the benefits of pineapple when you have a cold equal or exceed that of orange juice? The fruit also contains the essential enzyme bromelain, which suppresses coughs, loosens mucous and aids in digestion. The digestive enzyme works to metabolize fat, critical in your fat burning arrangement.

The proteolytic enzyme bromelain also works as an anti-inflammatory and helps to speed recovery from surgery and injury. To maximize its anti-inflammatory effects, eat pineapple alone or in between meals.

Vitamin C in pineapple is a potent antioxidant that fights off the dangerous effects of free radicals roaming your body. This helps to prevent heart attack, stroke, cancer, joint pain, osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.

Pineapple is also a good source of thiamin, which contributes to enzymatic reactions that are central to your body's production of energy – another crucial component of your fat burning process.

The fruit is also rich in copper. Vitamin B-6 and Vitamin K.

How To Prepare Pineapple

Pineapples do not ripen after picking. They are picked ripe. When shopping for pineapple, look for fruit that's firm, heavy for their size, with deep green leaves. Don't buy pineapple that looks brown, or old, with dried, brown leaves, obvious soft spots or bruises.

You can store pineapple in the refrigerator for 2-4 days, but it is best eaten fresh right away. Once you cut pineapple, it will last a couple of days in a tightly closed container kept in the refrigerator.

Fresh pineapple makes a great snack, cut into cubes or wedges or chunks. You can make a delicious fruit salad with chunks of fresh pineapple along with your other favorite fruits.

Grill fresh pineapple slices to add to your meal as an accompaniment, or place the grilled slices atop your fish or chicken. When you grill pineapple, remember it only takes a few minutes. So, if you're grilling chicken, for example, add the pineapple slices to the grill just before the chicken is done grilling.

Pineapple chunks make a great addition to either chicken salad or tuna salad.

Fresh pineapple makes a wonderful juice by itself. You can also add orange, strawberries or other fruit along with yogurt and/or ice cubes to make nutritious and delicious smoothies. Serve pineapple chunks on top of fat-free or low-fat yogurt or cottage cheese.

How Much To Eat

Eat one cup of raw, diced pineapple (about 155 grams) or one slice that's 3-1/2" in diameter and 3/4" thick).

Plums

Plums are a fruit that's hard-pitted, like cherries. It is a drupe and related to nectarines and peaches, although much more diverse than either of those fruits.

The fruit has two distinct types: the common European plum and the Japanese plum. The European probably originated near the Caspian Sea and made its way into Europe. The European plum species of fruit is cultivated mostly in California and comes in varieties that are yellow, red, green, although purplish-blue is the most common and popular. Today, there are more than 140 varieties of plums sold in the United States.

The Japanese plum is more pointed at the end than the European plum and varieties range from yellow to light-red (but never purplish-blue).

Some plums are specifically bred to be dried. These retain their sweetness and are used and sold as prunes.

Plums' Fat Fighting Benefits

Plums are low-fat, free of saturated fat, sodium-free and cholesterol-free. They are high in Vitamin C, which boosts your metabolism and protects against free radical damage to your body. They are also high in Vitamin A and rich in iron, calcium and phosphorus.

Plums (and prunes) are a natural stimulant to your bowels. This aids in removing toxins and excess waste from your body.

The fruit is an excellent source of potassium. One 2-1/8 inch plum contains 104 grams of potassium. And potassium helps your body metabolize protein and carbohydrate.

Plums are also a good source of two amino acids: aspartic acid and glutamic acid. These amino acids work to cleanse your liver of toxins and to metabolize sugars and fats.

How To Prepare Plums

Plums should be rich in color for their variety. Make sure they're plump to the touch and heavy for their weight. If it gives a bit to finger pressure, it's ready to eat. But you can buy them unripe and place them in a brown paper bag on the counter to ripen for a day or two. They won't increase in sweetness. Ripe plums will be slightly soft to the touch, but avoid shriveled or mushy ones or those with skin breaks. You can store ripened plums in the refrigerator for about three days. Eat them right away for the best benefit!

The fruit is always at its juiciest best when eaten at room temperature. European plums are best for cooking. If you want the skins removed, blanch the fruit in boiling water for about 30 seconds and then peel.

You can bake plums cut in half on a baking dish, sprinkled with non-sugar sweetener, maybe a dash of cinnamon or fruit juice. Cover and cook until tender (about 20 minutes in a 400-degree oven).

Poached plums are delicious as well. You cook them whole in a simmering juice, or water and sugar, or wine, and cook until they're tender (about 3-8 minutes).

Add chopped plums to a fruit parfait with yogurt.

Arrange sliced plums in a salad. Or make a delicious fruit salad with plum slices, blueberries, strawberries and peaches.

Put sliced plums on top of your steel-cut oatmeal instead of sugar.

How Much To Eat

Eat one small to one medium plum per serving.

Red Currants (Also White Currants)

Fresh currants (whether red or white) are small fruits that are tart. They come in red, black or white berries that are from the gooseberry family of fruits.

Most fresh currants go into jellies and jams, while white currants are an albino variety of red currant. They're not as tart and can be eaten raw.

Red Currants' Fat Fighting Benefits

Red and white currants are fat-free, low in saturated fat, low in cholesterol and low in sodium. They are a very good source of dietary fiber and the Vitamins C and K, and a good source for potassium and manganese.

The antioxidant properties that Vitamins A, C and E in currants contain help to slow the aging process in the body and the brain. These antioxidants also help to prevent cancer of the esophagus and colon.

Red currants are thought to help stave off Alzheimer's disease. The black currant variety is actually higher in antioxidants than the potent antioxidant blueberry. Red currants also contain four times the amount of Vitamin C than oranges, and more potassium than bananas.

Potassium helps to stimulate cell regeneration, stabilized blood pressure, works to reduce high blood pressure, maintains your body's fluid balance, and helps with myriad other bodily defense mechanisms. All of these contribute to your fat burning process.

Red currants also contain anthocyanins, powerful phytochemicals known for their outstanding anti-inflammatory properties. The darker the fruit, the more anthocyanins it contains.

The fruit also contains significant amounts of soluble fiber, Vitamin B-6 and copper.

How To Prepare Red Currants

Red currants are delicious in tarts, on top of green leafy salads, or eaten whole and raw. They are best eaten when they are picked, as they don't ripen afterwards.

The fruit is very fragile, so handle with care.

Use them as a garnish on a sorbet.

Of course, you can use them in jams, as a decorative (and nutritious) garnish to poultry or seafood dishes.

Add a few to a fruit salad for a tangy and delicious taste surprise.

To serve, pick them over, wash thoroughly and remove the stems.

How Much To Eat

Eat about one cup of currants (112 grams) daily.

Watermelon

Although consumed as a fruit in the USA, watermelon is actually a vegetable related to cucumbers, pumpkins and squash. It is grown in more than 96 countries around the world. Watermelon is the most consumed melon (by weight) in the U.S., followed by honeydew melon and cantaloupe.

There are more than 50 different watermelon varieties in America (and more than 1,200 worldwide), with flesh ranging from red to orange and yellow. In the United States, four varieties are generally found: Ice-Box (oblong, red or yellow flesh, dark or light green rind), Allsweet (oblong red flesh, dark green rind with stripes or not), Yellow Flesh (ranges from yellow to orange flesh, round or oval shaped, rind that's light green with mottled stripes), and Seedless (either red or yellow flesh, round to oval shaped, light green rind and dark green stripes).

Watermelon's Fat Fighting Benefits

Watermelon is fat-free and cholesterol-free, low in sodium and 92% water (and it acts as a natural diuretic!). It is an excellent source of lycopene, fiber, potassium and Vitamins A, B-6 and C as well as E. The entire watermelon is edible – flesh, seeds and rinds – although most folks in the U.S. only eat the flesh.

The American Heart Association has certified watermelon with its heart-check mark for its numerous healthy properties.

Watermelon is loaded with lycopene. In fact, scientists have discovered that watermelon contains more lycopene than any other fresh vegetable or fruit. Lycopene is what gives watermelon its rich coloring and is found in plants, part of plant compounds called carotenoids. Lycopene also acts as a powerful antioxi-

dant. Lycopene is actually the most potent free radical scavenger of all the carotenoids because of its ability to neutralize numerous oxygen particles with only one lycopene molecule. Free radicals can cause massive damage to cell tissue and membranes, ultimately destroying them. Lycopene in watermelon acts as an effective deterrent. It also protects against cancer.

Watermelon is a good source of Vitamin C (ascorbic acid) and Vitamin E, along with calcium, magnesium and folate. The fiber in watermelon helps with your digestion of food and also helps stabilize your blood-glucose levels.

It contains great amounts of Vitamin A and potassium. Vitamin A, which is also called retinol, helps keep your eyes, skin and mucous membranes moist. It's a great benefit to vision. Its antioxidant properties guard against free radical damage to cells and tissues. Potassium is an electrolyte, which helps maintain fluid balance and acid-base balance, and assists the functioning of muscles and nerve cells, heart, kidney and adrenal glands.

How To Prepare Watermelon

Watermelon is best eaten raw. It can be cut into cubes, scooped into balls, carved into slices. In Egypt and Israel, watermelon's sweet taste is often served with the bite of feta cheese, although for your fat burning process, it may be more advisable to forego the feta and substitute fat-free yogurt.

Eat watermelon chunks as a satisfying snack or have some with lunch. Watermelon juice is a great thirst quencher, too. Just be sure to use the juice from fresh watermelon, not commercial juices.

Combine with other fruit in a delicious fruit salad or add to a fruit and vegetable tray for appetizers.

Watermelon in a sorbet is wonderful also as a dessert. You can also scoop out the flesh of the watermelon and use the shell as a decorative basket for your fruit salad.

When selecting watermelon, look for melons that are firm, have no cracks, mold, soft spots or bruises. When you lift them, they should feel heavy for their size.

Their underside will have a yellow patch where the melon touched the ground. The rind should have a healthy shine with a dried-out stem and dull rind. Make sure it smells fragrant!

You don't want to pick melons that are extremely hard or those that have a pale green underbelly – this indicates they are not ripe.

Watermelon can be stored in the refrigerator for up to two weeks, but they're best eaten ice-cold and ripe. Wash the melon with soapy water before you cut, making sure to remove any dirt residue. Once you've cut the melon, store any unused portions in closed containers (or plastic bags) and refrigerate.

How Much To Eat

This depends on how you're serving it, but watermelon is typically eaten by the slice. It's also eaten diced in cubes in fruit salads and desserts (about one cup), or watermelon balls (10 per serving).

Chapter 3

Fat Fighting Foods

VEGETABLES

Artichoke

Artichoke, a popular vegetable, is actually a flower bud, a close relative to the thistle plant. If allowed to flower, the artichoke bloom becomes a flower that's seven inches in diameter with a deep violet-blue color.

There are two varieties of artichoke, the Green Globe, which is available year-round, and the Desert Globe, which you can find in markets from December-March and again from July-September.

Artichoke leaves, somewhat spiny, proceed from the base of a stem. The heart and the leaves are the portions of the plant that you eat.

Artichoke's Fat Fighting Benefits

Artichokes offer a variety of Fat Fighting Benefits that make this a truly wonderful vegetable addition to your weekly food fare. It acts as a diuretic, which helps to speed away toxins from your bloodstream.

The artichoke, nutrient dense, offers 16 essential nutrients in about 25 calories per medium artichoke.

The vegetable provides a good source of fiber to keep you full and satisfied, Vitamin C to boost your metabolism to burn fats, and folate to expedite digestion.

The important minerals of magnesium, manganese, potassium, phosphorus, calcium and iron literally jam each artichoke and provide healthful and fat-burning benefits.

The powerful antioxidant properties of the compound silymarin help your liver to regenerate healthy tissue.

Many phytochemicals in artichokes are currently being studied for their ability to maintain health as well as prevent disease.

How To Prepare Artichoke

The best way to eat artichoke is steamed or boiled. First, clean and trim the artichokes. Then select a heavy pot with lid, according to how many artichokes you plan to cook. Add 1-1/2 to 2 cups of water to the pan. Cover and bring to a boil. Then, simmer for about 30-40 minutes, or until you can pull out a leaf easily from the middle row of leaves. Remove from the pan and allow to drain.

You can serve artichokes either hot or cold, although chilled artichokes offer more intense flavor.

Artichokes are great in soups, stuffed artichokes, marinated artichoke hearts,

Here's what to look for when you shop for artichokes. You want artichokes that are heavy and dark green with tight leaves. Don't buy any that are turning brown or look dry.

Clean artichokes by tipping them upside down in the sink and then rinse under running water to remove dirt and residue. You can either cut away the entire stem, or leave about 1-1/2 inches and peel off the outer skin and the lower tiny leaves along the bottom of the choke.

Some folks snip off the spiny tips of the leaves or cut off the tops of the artichoke prior to stuffing. If you cut off the stalks, save them for making great tasting soup!

Once you've prepared the artichokes, place them in a pan of water with the juice of 1-2 lemons before you cook them to keep them fresh.

The art of eating artichokes involves a few simple steps. You pull each leaf off the choke and hold the pointed end between your fingers while you drag the leaf end through your teeth. You'll find that most of the edible portion of the leaf is on the inside bottom 1/3 portion. Keep a bowl handy for the discarded leaves.

How Much To Eat

One medium artichoke is adequate for one daily serving.

Arugula

Arugula, also called rocket, rucola and roquette, is a cruciferous vegetable that's been around since the time of the Romans. In fact, arugula has been a part of Italian cuisine since then, often used for both the leaves in cooking and the aromatic oils made from its seeds.

The seeds of the arugula plant were thought to have remarkable powers and were used to make aphrodisiac potions since the first century.

Arugula leaves are small with bright dark green leaves and the flavor and leaf shape is close to that of radishes, that is to say, spicy, bitter and peppery. The older leaves, and those grown in hotter climates, have a more pronounced peppery taste.

Arugula's Fat Fighting Benefits

Arugula contains phytochemicals known as indoles, which help in staving off cancer. The vegetable is low in calories and carbohydrates, fat-free and cholesterol-free and contain low amounts of sodium. It is a good source of protein, thiamin, riboflavin, Vitamin B-6, Pantothenic acid, zinc and copper and folate, dietary fiber, Vitamins A, C and K, calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium and manganese.

It is high in calcium and potassium to help build bones and regulate blood pressure. The fiber helps you to feel full and also binds to toxins to speed them through your body.

It also contains good amounts of folate and Vitamins A and K. Your body needs folate for development of new tissue. It is essential for growth and good health. Since folate cannot be manufactured by the human body, you need to get adequate amounts of folate from foods or supplements. And folate is easily destroyed through overcooking, so be careful not to overcook the leaves of arugula.

Vitamin A, a fat-soluble vitamin, helps you maintain good vision and to keep skin and mucous membranes moist. Its anti-oxidant properties help to ward off free-radical damage to the body's cells and tissues.

Vitamin K helps your body to synthesize calcium. It can also help to prevent osteoporosis and help improve bone density. Another benefit of Vitamin K is its aid to blood clotting.

Arugula is high in beta carotene, a powerful anti-oxidant, which helps in preventing night blindness, vision problems, skin disorders, enhances your body's immunity, and protects against toxins, infections, colds, flu and infections. It also protects against cancer.

The powerful anti-oxidant lutein is also present in large amounts in arugula. Lutein helps the body scavenge free-radicals by quenching oxygen. Many studies also connect lutein to benefits in the eye, heart, skin, and in helping with cancer, immune problems and diabetes.

How To Prepare Arugula

The fresh, tender leaves of arugula are best eaten raw. They are a wonderful peppery-taste addition to green, leafy salads. Use them as either the main green (remember that they have a rather strong taste, so decide accordingly), or as an accompaniment to other greens.

The more mature leaves are best used in cooking, and are a staple of Italian cuisine.

The spicy arugula leaves also complement fruit salads. Use them lightly to add a terrific zing to fruit salads.

They can be used in sauces, soups or as a sautéed accompaniment to a main entrée. Use the very young arugula for your salads, and cook with the older arugula.

Arugula leaves should be a bright dark green. Avoid leaves that are yellow or wilted. Wash arugula, dry it and store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. Plan to

use within 1-2 days so it retains its optimum freshness as it is a very fragile vegetable.

How Much To Eat

About ½ cup raw arugula is sufficient per daily serving.

Asparagus

Native to Eurasia, asparagus has been regarded as a delicacy since the time of the Romans. It is a green vegetable that has a spear with a budding head. All parts of the asparagus spear are edible.

Available year-round, asparagus comes in three varieties: white, purple and the most common, green. Did you know that white asparagus is grown in the absence of sunlight? Purple is rare in U.S. supermarkets but is found in Europe.

Grown in California and Washington in the USA, asparagus also grows in Mexico and Chile. Both latter countries export to the states, so the availability of the vegetable is almost constant.

Asparagus' Fat Fighting Benefits

Asparagus is a great source of folate and Vitamin C and potassium.

Folate is key in cell maintenance and repair, formation of red and white blood cells, synthesis of DNA and amino acid metabolism. Folic acid has been shown to decrease the risk of coronary heart disease.

Vitamin C helps your body to fight off infections, and to stimulate your metabolism to burn fat.

Potassium helps regulate blood pressure and helps your body to maintain proper fluid balance.

The vegetable is also low in calories, contains no fat or cholesterol, and is very low in sodium. It's also a rich source of rutin, which is a drug that strengthens the

walls of your capillaries. And asparagus is a significant source of both thiamin and Vitamin B-6.

It is also believed to stimulate immunity and helps to lower cholesterol levels in your body. It is also a good source of Vitamin E.

Asparagus contains inulin, which is a carbohydrate that your body doesn't digest, but uses to feed friendly bacteria in your intestine. This keeps your intestinal tract clear of unfriendly bacteria.

Asparagus root contains steroidal glycosides, compounds which may help your body ward off inflammation. Asparagus root is used by Chinese herbalists in the treatment of arthritis.

A key fat-burning benefit of asparagus (also considered a natural diuretic) is that it contains fructo-oligosaccharides (FOS). These promote the growth in your body's colon of beneficial bacteria.

Asparagine, an alkaloid chemical present in asparagus, stimulates the kidneys while it improves circulation. The alkaloid breaks down oxalic acid, which tends to glue fat to cells. By breaking down the acid, fat is loosened from cells.

One half cup of cooked asparagus contains about 25% of the recommended daily allowance for folic acid, as well as more than 80% for Vitamin C.

Asparagus also contains beneficial phytochemicals, which are natural substances in plants that help protect our overall health.

How To Prepare Asparagus

Asparagus is a great addition to any meal. It's delicious eaten by itself or cooked and added to a meal as a side vegetable. Try asparagus spears added to your favorite salad! It's great with tuna, chicken or just green, leafy salad mixes.

Dip steamed or chilled asparagus spears into your favorite low-fat salad dressing for a terrific taste treat. Use asparagus as an appetizer or a snack.

When you buy asparagus, look for firm, dark colored stalks. Did you know that the plant's thickness of the spear indicates its age? Young asparagus plants produce very slim spears, while older plants produce thick ones. Make sure the stalks are straight and the tips are tightly closed. If the stems look rigid and have a dull green color, it means they are old. Avoid those! Also look for stalks that have moisture in the cut, not dry ones. Always choose asparagus that's uniform in length and width to ensure proper cooking.

Do not wash asparagus until you're ready to eat it. When you do wash it, don't submerge it in water. To store asparagus, trim the cut ends and let them stand upright in a bowl of water for about two days' maximum in the refrigerator.

You can peel the lower stalks so you avoid woody strips. This is especially true when the stalks are wider.

How Much To Eat

One cup of asparagus is only 90 grams. That's about six spears of asparagus. This is sufficient for a daily serving. To vary your meals, and to be sure you consume enough various vegetables per week, you can aim for at least one-half to one cup of asparagus per week.

Broccoli

Broccoli is a cruciferous vegetable. It is also a member of the cabbage family. The vegetable, whose name comes from the Latin word, "brachium", which means branch or arm, has been cultivated for more than 2,000 years. There are many broccoli varieties, although the most common is the Italian green version (also called the sprouting broccoli). The dark green stalks are clustered with dark purplish-green florets.

Broccoli is available year-round, but it grows much better in cooler weather. Did you know that 90% of the broccoli consumed in the United States is grown in California's Salinas Valley?

Broccoli's Fat Fighting Benefits

Broccoli is one of your richest sources of Vitamins A and C. In fact, the Vitamin C in broccoli exceeds that found in oranges! And, broccoli is loaded with potassium, which helps regulate blood pressure and maintain fluid levels in your body. It's also loaded with fiber in the form of pectin, which clings to acids in your bile and prevents toxins from being released into your bloodstream that can increase cholesterol. Further good news is that broccoli is an excellent source of folic acid, which many scientists believe can significantly reduce heart attack risk, as well as offer protection against Alzheimer's disease.

Vitamin A helps to ward off infection. It helps keep your system free of toxins that may otherwise do great damage to your body. Vitamin A helps keep your mucous membranes moist and also aids in protecting your gastrointestinal tract, skeletal structure and reproductive system. It helps keep your skin moist, and your eyes moist – both benefiting your body. Vitamin A's anti-oxidant properties help your body protect against coronary heart disease by preventing the formation of LDL (the bad cholesterol).

The mineral chromium that broccoli contains also contributes to lowering of your body's blood sugar levels.

To consume the most vitamins, make sure to eat the florets, as these contain more vitamins than the stalks. These florets also contain more beta carotene than the stalks, about 8% more.

Broccoli also contains many phytochemicals, such as sulforaphane, which is believed to protect against cancer. The vegetable also has good amounts of thiamin, phosphorus and iron. Other phytochemicals in broccoli include beta carotene, indoles and isothiocyanates. These protect the body from carcinogens by stopping them from getting to target cells, as well as detoxifying the carcinogens with natural beneficial enzyme production.

How To Prepare Broccoli

Broccoli can be eaten raw, with florets added to salads, or cooked, broiled or steamed or used in stir-fry. Always choose bunches that are dark green, since the rich dark color means they're high in nutrient value. You also want to choose firm

stalks, not loose or rubbery ones which indicate they're too old to use. And also avoid open, water-soaked bud clusters, tough woody stems or pale yellow or discolored stalks.

Store unwashed broccoli in a plastic bag in the refrigerator and use within a day after you buy it.

When you cook broccoli, use as little water as possible. This helps to prevent the loss of vital nutrients and to eliminate the stinky smell that's released when the ammonia and hydrogen sulfide compounds are released from the vegetable. You could also add a small bread slice to the pot to prevent the smell of cooked broccoli from smelling up your kitchen. To ensure that the stems cook thoroughly, cut a small X in the stalks.

Add broccoli to stir-fry, or eat it as a vegetable side dish. They're also great to dip in low-fat salad dressing on a vegetable tray as an appetizer.

Don't forget the broccoli leaves! They're actually the richest source of beta carotene in the entire plant. Add them to your tossed salads for a nutritious and delicious surprise!

How Much To Eat

Eat about one cup of chopped, cooked broccoli per serving. Or, one medium broccoli (remember that the florets contain most of the vitamins). You can eat one cup of broccoli 3-5 times each week in order to get your adequate amount of vegetable servings.

Brussels Sprouts

Named after the country where they are thought to have originated, Brussels sprouts look just like miniature cabbages. They taste a bit like them as well, although they have a slightly milder taste and a texture that's denser. Brussels sprouts, along with cabbage, is a member of the cruciferous family of vegetables.

California grows most of the Brussels sprouts, and they're available year-round, although their peak season is from fall through early spring.

Brussels Sprouts' Fat Fighting Benefits

Brussels sprouts are low-fat, low in saturated fat, and very low in cholesterol.

They are a good source for iron, riboflavin, phosphorus, copper, magnesium and thiamin and an excellent source for dietary fiber, Vitamins A, B-6, C and K, along with manganese, potassium and folate.

Potassium helps regulate fluid balance in the body and maintain good blood pressure levels.

Dietary fiber helps keep you regular by speeding away toxins from the body. The nutrients in cabbage act to stimulate your pancreas to release hormones that clean cells. Minerals in Brussels sprouts stimulate the kidneys to release waste quicker.

Scientists know that the plant phytochemicals found in Brussels sprouts act to enhance the body's natural defense mechanisms and thus protect against disease, including cancer. The sulforaphane, a potent phytonutrient in Brussels sprouts, boosts the body's detoxifying enzymes. This helps to clear out potentially cancerous substances from the body.

Known for its anti-inflammatory properties, Brussels sprouts are potent antioxidants as well. Vitamins C and K, along with folate and beta carotene serve to protect against inflammation.

Brussels sprouts contain good amounts of various amino acids, including tryptophan which wards off sugar cravings, guards against obesity and high blood lipids. There's also excellent amounts of phenylalanine, which acts as an appetite suppressant, isoleucine and leucine for low blood sugar, lysine for muscle building, histidine for low stomach acid.

Threonine in Brussels sprouts acts as a digestive aid. Excellent amounts of valine protect against low blood sugar as well as insomnia, emotional distress and nervous tension.

How To Prepare Brussels Sprouts

Look for Brussels sprouts that are bright green, firm and compact. Watch out for yellow leaves. That indicates the sprouts are old, and they'll have a bitter taste. It's best to pick sprouts by hand from a display rather than buy them in a pre-packaged carton. Buy sprouts that are similar in size, so they'll cook evenly. Avoid any that feel soft.

Refrigerate after purchase, because their leaves will turn yellow if you leave them out on the counter.

When you're ready to use, separate and discard the yellow or wilted outer leaves and trim off the stems. If you cut a shallow X in the base of the stem with a small knife, this will allow the Brussels sprout to cook the core as quickly as the leaf.

Brussels sprouts are a little too strong-tasting to eat raw. Best bet is to blanch them in boiling water quickly, drain, and then submerge them in an ice bath and drain again.

Many cooks either steam or boil Brussels sprouts to serve as a vegetable accompaniment to a main entrée. There are two ways to steam the vegetable. Either place them in a 1/2 inch of already boiling water or put them in a covered vegetable steamer. Steam for 1-2 minutes, then uncover the pot to release the sulfur compounds, and then re-cover and steam for another 6-12 minutes (5-10 minutes if you're using boiling water method). Test for doneness with a fork poke, but don't overcook.

Brussels sprouts are also excellent added to soups and stews. You can use up your leftover sprouts from dinner by tossing them in the soup or stew pot. Never waste sprouts!

How Much To Eat

One half cup is a standard serving size for one person, although if you're serving more than one vegetable with your main entrée, you may opt for 2-3 sprouts.

Cabbage

Cabbage is a cruciferous vegetable whose family also includes broccoli, kale, collards, cauliflower, kohlrabi and Brussels sprouts. The cabbage family has tight-headed versions, green and red ones, Savoy and Chinese, Bok Choy and Napa. The vegetable grows best in cooler climates. Green and red cabbage has smooth leaves. Chinese, Bok Choy, Napa and Savoy cabbage leaves are ruffled.

Cabbage's Fat Fighting Benefits

Cabbage is no-fat, cholesterol-free, low in sodium, cholesterol and carbohydrate. It is also an excellent source of calcium, riboflavin, iron, thiamin, magnesium, phosphorus and selenium. But its real benefit is as a prime source of fiber, Vitamins C, K and B-6, folate, potassium and manganese.

The rich Vitamin C content in cabbage means you're giving your body the benefit of a powerful anti-oxidant. This anti-oxidant, along with the great fiber in cabbage, may help reduce your risk of colon and rectal cancer.

Did you know that the odor that comes from cabbage is its sulphur content? This substance helps protect your body from bacteria. The anthocyanin in cabbage, the sulforaphane, along with the iodine content present in cabbage, increases the production of the human body's anti-oxidants and enzymes that help it to detoxify and break up fatty deposits. And detoxification helps eliminate toxins from the body, including carcinogenic compounds.

Cabbage is also high in the amino acid, glutamine, which has very powerful anti-bacterial properties. Studies have shown that glutamine in cabbage leaves promote ulcer healing since it nourishes the lining of the stomach and small intestine. This high glutamine content is also extremely beneficial in your fat-burning food arrangement.

And phytochemicals abound in cabbage. Phytochemicals give the plants their color and flavor. In the human body, these phytochemicals help protect us against disease. The most beneficial phytochemical in cabbage is indoles, which are potent anti-cancer fighters.

How To Prepare Cabbage

Cabbage is an extremely versatile staple for your fat-burning diet. You can cook it by steaming or boiling, you can use it in a delicious stir-fry, shred it for coleslaw or add to greens in your salads, eat as sauerkraut, use as an outer wrapper for cooked meats or vegetables. An old favorite is stuffed cabbage, which may be made with ground organic turkey, celery, onion, garlic and spices, wrapped in steamed, slightly softened cabbage leaves and baked in a large pot with tomato sauce and water for about 1-1/2 hours at 350 degrees.

When choosing cabbage, look for firm heads (no matter the cabbage type) that have shiny and crisp-looking leaves. Stay clear of those with lots of bruises or cracks which may indicate internal damage due to worms or other problems. They may also just be old cabbage that's been stored too long. In either case, the nutritional and fat-burning value only comes from the freshest cabbage.

Remember that once you cut cabbage, it begins to lose its vital Vitamin C very rapidly, so use it right away once you do cut. You can store the entire head of cabbage in the refrigerator for about two weeks in a plastic bag that has perforations in it to allow air to circulate around the head.

Cabbage leaves are a great addition to a multi-vegetable soup! And, for something really different, try a layer of shredded cabbage atop your favorite sandwich!

How Much To Eat

To obtain vital nutrients, minerals and health and fat-burning benefits of cabbage, aim to eat 1/2 to one full cup of cabbage about three times each week. This is easy enough to do, with coleslaw, sauerkraut, cooked cabbage, shredded cabbage, cabbage wraps, etc.

Cauliflower

Cauliflower, while a flower, is a member of the cruciferous vegetables family which includes broccoli, cabbage, watercress, arugula, rutabaga, turnips, collards, kohlrabi, radish and horseradish.

There are three basic types of broccoli: the creamy white, the broccoflower, which is actually a hybrid of broccoli and cauliflower, and the purple-headed cauliflower. There are some newer hybrids that include yellow and orange cauliflower as well. All this is good news for adding variety to your fat-burning arrangement. The creamy florets variety is most abundant in markets in the USA and has a mild taste. The green hybrid broccoflower has an even milder taste and, since is less dense than the white variety, cooks more quickly.

Cauliflower's Fat Fighting Benefits

Cauliflower, as a member of the cruciferous vegetable family, is high in Vitamin C, fiber, complex carbohydrates and folate. The vegetable is low in calories and a good supply of potassium and Vitamin B-6, both of which work to protect your heart.

Be sure to remember that cooking cauliflower destroys much of the Vitamin C. A Cornell University study found that 100 grams of cauliflower wound up with only 55 milligrams of the vital vitamin after the vegetable was boiled, 82 after being microwaved (and we never recommend microwaving for any food!) and 70 after steaming. To get the most of cauliflower's nutrients, eat it raw as often as possible!

It also contains numerous bioflavonoids and nutrients that fight against several diseases. The two main disease fighters, which also offer protection to your fat-burning arrangement, are indole-3-carbinol, or 13C, and sulforaphane, a phytonutrient. Both 13C and sulforaphane work in concert as an anti-estrogen to eliminate toxins before they can turn into cancer cells, and thus offer protection against breast and prostate gland cancer.

Detoxification also works well in your fat-burning arrangement, since speeding away toxins cleanses your liver and helps to neutralize the effects of cell damage. And elimination of toxins helps you to lose weight safely as well.

How To Prepare Cauliflower

As previously stated, the most Vitamin C and nutrients come from eating raw cauliflower. If you do cook it, try to use as little time in the boiling or steaming pot as possible, since overcooking significantly reduces the vegetable's nutrients.

Cauliflower is available year-round, but since it grows best in cooler climates, it's generally more plentiful in autumn. When shopping for cauliflower, look for firm, compact heads that are heavy for their size. Avoid those with spots or discoloration.

You can store cauliflower for up to five days in your refrigerator's crisper section. Cauliflower should be stored in a plastic bag with perforations to allow the circulation of air. You'll want to keep the head stem side up to prevent moisture from collecting. Eat as soon as possible to get the maximum nutritional benefit. By the same token, avoid buying precut cauliflower, since they do not keep very well.

To cook cauliflower, you can separate the florets into equal size portions. Or, you can cook the head whole. The vegetable emits a strong odor when cooked, so try to cook it as rapidly as possible. Steaming is the preferred method, since it preserves much of the vitamin content. Cauliflower may turn yellow in alkaline water, so to keep its creamy white appearance, you can add one tablespoon of milk or lemon juice to the water in the pot.

Cauliflower is delicious as a side vegetable to your entrée. It's also a wonderful addition to vegetable soups or stews. Don't forget the cauliflower stems and leaves in the soups and stews – they have lots of nutrients you don't want to lose!

Try cauliflower florets raw in your salads. Or serve them with a low-fat salad dressing as an appetizer. If you like mashed potatoes, try adding some mashed cauliflower in place of some of the potatoes. It's delicious and nutritious!

How Much To Eat

Eat ½ to one cup of cauliflower about three times each week.

Celeriac

Celeriac is a variety of celery that's also known as celery knob, celery root and turnip rooted celery. Cultivated for its knobby and globular shaped root, celeriac has a flavor much like celery and parsley.

Just because its appearance is a little unusual, with its little crevices and rootlets, don't bypass celeriac! It's used routinely in French cuisine and throughout Europe.

Celeriac's Fat Fighting Benefits

Celeriac is wonderfully nutritious with its fat-free, cholesterol-free and low sodium content. High in Vitamin C, phosphorus and potassium, celeriac acts like a natural diuretic. This cleanses your kidneys and flushes out toxins from your liver. Its cleansing properties also benefit your lymphatic and nervous systems.

The root also provides an excellent source of fiber, which keeps you feeling satisfied and full without eating too much.

Vitamin C boosts your metabolism to burn fats.

Potassium stabilizes blood pressure levels, maintains fluid balance and helps to promote proper functioning of the tissue in your nervous system. The mineral is also vital to your kidneys in their waste removal tasks.

Remember, wherever a recipe calls for celery, you can substitute celeriac.

Celeriac's low-calorie, nutrient-rich content is perfect for your fat burning routine.

How To Prepare Celeriac

Available year-round, celeriac season peaks between November and April. Shop for roots that have the smoothest skin and fewest knobs as these will be easier to peel. These will probably be the medium sized roots that are sold with or without the tops. When you buy with the tops, cut these off and save for stews. Wrap roots in plastic and refrigerate, but use within one week.

To prepare, scrub the roots thoroughly and then trim off the top and bottom, quarter, peel and cook before you eat them. You won't want to cook them too long, however, as this will turn them mushy.

Use celeriac just like you would turnip and rutabaga. This means you can julienne, grate or shred and serve them raw on vegetable platters, or toss them in stews and soups for delicious taste or add them to salads.

Celery root (celeriac) can be added to stuffing for a poultry surprise that's delicious and nutritious!

Try a celeriac and cabbage slaw with cider-Dijon dressing for something really different.

How Much To Eat

About one cup of celeriac pieces is good for an average serving. This is especially easy when you add celeriac to soups, stews and vegetable platters.

Celery

Celery is a biennial vegetable (meaning its life cycle is only two years) whose closest relatives include carrots, fennel, parsley and dill. All parts of the plant are edible, including the ribs, stems and leaves.

Celery's Fat Fighting Benefits

Celery contains almost no calories and great amounts of Vitamin C, as well as active compounds, like phalides, that help lower cholesterol, and the cancer-fighting coumarins.

Vitamin C is a powerful protection against the damage of free radicals in your body, helps reduce inflammation, and assists in promoting cardiovascular health and in preventing heart attacks, strokes and cancer. It also helps reduce the severity of colds and asthma.

Chinese medical practitioners have long recognized celery's ability to lower blood pressure. That's because the vegetable contains pthalides, which allows the mus-

cles around the arteries to relax and permits the arteries to dilate. With more space, blood can flow at a much lower pressure. Pthalides also reduce stress hormones.

Celery is also a great source of potassium, magnesium and calcium, which also help to reduce blood pressure. The high calcium concentration in raw celery ignites your endocrine system so your hormones break up accumulated fat build up.

But celery is relatively high in sodium. How does this equate when compared to its ability to lower blood pressure? The daily intake of sodium, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, is about 2,400 milligrams of sodium. In two celery stalks (about one cup), there are only about 100 mg of sodium. So you can easily add celery to your weekly food arrangement with no fear.

Celery is also a potent diuretic. This is due to its high concentration of potassium and sodium, both of which help to regulate fluid balance and stimulate the production of urine – which rids your body of excess fluid and gets rid of toxins. It acts as an anti-inflammatory and antioxidant for the kidneys.

Magnesium and iron in celery promotes a clean-out of your system.

The coumarins content of celery helps to combat free radical damage that can lead to cancerous cells. Coumarins also enhance the ability of the body's white blood cells which are immune fighters to repel cancerous attacks. And the vegetable also contains acetylenics, which help to stop tumor cell growth.

How To Prepare Celery

Available year-round, you'll want to select celery that is firm, compact in shape and crisp. The leaves should be green. Avoid celery that is bruised or has deep cuts or dark spots.

You can store celery for about two weeks in your refrigerator's crisper drawer. You can place wilted stalks in some ice water for a few minutes before you use them.

Make sure to wash celery thoroughly as dirt can lodge deep in the ribs of the plant. To serve, cut into bite-size chunks or slice vertically. Celery is great as a vegetable appetizer, snack, in salads, soups, stews and stir-fry.

You can eat it raw, or add a splash of lemon juice for flavor. You can cook celery alone to serve alongside your main entrée.

How Much To Eat

No more than two stalks at a time for the optimum nutritional value. Remember that celery does contain sodium, so two stalks equal about 100 mg of sodium in a USFDA 2,400 mg per day limitation. But you can easily have a couple of stalks of nutrient-rich and beneficial celery several times a week! It's great for your fat-burning arrangement.

Cucumber

With origins in India and spreading across Greece and Italy and finally to North America in the mid-16th century, cucumbers are indeed a popular food item. They are actually a fruit, but consumed as a vegetable.

Did you know that the phrase “cool as a cucumber” has a basis in fact? The internal temperature of a cucumber may be as much as 20 degrees less than its exterior temperature.

Cucumbers are from the same vegetable family that includes pumpkin, watermelon, various squashes and zucchini.

There are several cucumber varieties available in the United States. These include the long English or gourmet cucumber, sometimes referred to as seedless (although they may contain very tiny seeds that are edible). English cucumbers are usually shrink-wrapped. This process seals in moisture, since these cucumbers are not waxed. There are also the regular Persians with soft, edible seeds and dark skin that's often waxed to seal moisture in. The other variety is the pickling cucumbers. These are very small, almost finger-length cucumbers.

Cucumbers have a cool, crisp taste with moist flesh. They are usually quite juicy.

All these varieties of cucumbers are available year-round.

Cucumber's Fat Fighting Benefits

Cucumber is low in saturated fat, low in cholesterol and low in sodium. They are also an excellent source of Vitamin C and K, along with potassium. They are a good source of manganese, magnesium, Pantothenic acid and phosphorus.

Foods, like cucumber, that are high in potassium and fiber, help to lower your blood pressure.

It also provides some dietary fiber to make you feel fuller without consuming as much. There's also some Vitamin B-6, thiamin, folate and copper.

Two compounds found in cucumber, ascorbic acid (Vitamin C) and caffeic acid, help to prevent water retention. That's why cucumbers are often recommended for swollen eyes (you put cucumber slices on the puffiness under the lids), for inflammation and skin conditions.

The cucumber contains compounds called sterols, which have been shown to help lower cholesterol. The greatest concentration of sterols is in the cucumber skin, so whenever possible, make sure to leave the skin on and eat it (after thoroughly scrubbing).

The sulfur and silicon content in cucumbers helps to stimulate your kidneys. This action washes up uric acid and also loosens fat from cells.

Cucumbers are a great aid to digestion, and they also help cleanse the bowel. Cucumber juice helps to increase the flow of urine, and so it also helps with detoxification.

With little amount of calories per serving, cucumbers are a great boost to your fat-burning arrangement. They taste great and work wonders!

How To Prepare Cucumber

Cucumbers are eaten raw. They are most often used in fresh green salads along with other vegetables like onion, carrot, tomato and other additions. Many times

cucumbers are served sliced on a tray with a low-fat dip as an appetizer, or in addition to other vegetables. They can be sliced lengthwise in strips or cross-wise in circles.

Cucumber makes a great cold soup known as gazpacho. The simple way to make this is to slice cucumbers, bell peppers, green onions (also called scallions), chopped garlic and stir into tomato juice. Just chill and serve for a delicious and cooling taste treat!

Add cucumbers to sandwiches (or slimming wraps made with lettuce leaves).

Salmon also benefits from pairing with cucumber slices used as a garnish.

And, where would potato salad be without cucumber for crunch and taste treat?

When shopping for cucumbers, look for firm cukes without any soft spots, bruises or dark discolorations. The skin should have an even dark color for the variety. Cucumbers may be stored in your refrigerator for about a week and still maintain their freshness and nutritional value.

When you're ready to use, thoroughly wash and scrub the cucumber. For waxed cucumbers, you need to peel off the skin to remove the residual wax. English cucumbers are great to eat with the skin on, after you've scrubbed them clean. To remove seeds, slice cucumbers lengthwise. Then scoop out the seeds with a teaspoon.

How Much To Eat

Eat about 1/2 cup per serving, either sliced or diced in salads, or as sticks for a delicious and cooling, crisp appetizer.

Endive (and Chicory)

What's in a name? In this case, endive and chicory have different meanings for Americans and British. What we call endive, they refer to as chicory. What we call chicory, they call endive.

There are actually two types of endive – Belgian or French endive and chicory or curly endive. The Belgian or French variety is a member of the escarole and chicory family and has tight packed leaves shaped like a bullet. The center is a creamy yellow or white. Its taste is slightly bitter, but the texture is crisp. There is yet another chicory, Italian chicory, or radicchio. This is a mildly tasting, slightly bitter leafy vegetable. Two varieties of radicchio include radicchio di Verona, which looks like a small head of red lettuce, and radicchio di Treviso, which looks a lot like a red Belgian endive.

Endive is actually the second growth of the chicory root.

Chicory (or curly endive) has dark outer ragged-edged leaves on long-thin stems with pale, yellow leaves closer to the center. Its taste is slightly bitter.

Endive's (and Chicory's) Fat Fighting Benefits

Both endive and chicory are fat-free, sodium-free, cholesterol-free and loaded with essential vitamins, minerals and nutrients to help boost your fat-burning regimen into gear! The powerful array of minerals includes calcium, zinc, potassium, magnesium, iron and selenium.

Endive (and chicory) is a great source of beta carotene, which the body converts into Vitamin A. Beta carotene is a powerful antioxidant as well as an immune system booster. It benefits the human body in other ways: by lowering homocysteine levels (high homocysteine levels mean an increased risk factor for heart disease), and lowering risks for both macular degeneration and cataracts.

With significant levels of Vitamins B, C and folate, along with the minerals potassium and selenium, endive is a veritable nutrient powerhouse. And endive's Fat Fighting Benefits continue with its potent aid to digestion. That's because it contains complex fibers of cellulose and hemicelluloses which not only promote regularity, but also help prevent cholesterol absorption into the blood stream, slow food metabolism, keeping blood sugar levels in balance, and assist in removing toxins from the entire digestive tract.

Herbalists, meanwhile, have ample evidence that chicory helps to increase the production of bile. In addition, the root helps to lower cholesterol and moderate rapid heart rate, as well as destroy bacteria. Recent studies in Korea and Belgium show that chicory reduces cholesterol levels while it increases the ratio of good to bad cholesterol levels, and that chicory ingredients help prevent osteoporosis in humans and may offer hope for prevention of breast and colon cancer (following successful animal tests).

Chicory greens are also a good source of thiamin, niacin and zinc, along with Vitamins A, B-6, C, E and K, riboflavin, dietary fiber, folate, Pantothenic acid, calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, manganese and copper.

How To Prepare Endive and Chicory

Endive and chicory are very popular used in fresh, green salads. Chicory root, roasted and powdered, is often used as a coffee substitute or additive.

How Much To Eat

One cup of chopped chicory greens or chopped endive is a perfect daily serving.

Fennel

Fennel is eaten as a vegetable with the stem and bulb. The leaves are often used as an herb for salads. It is crunchy and slightly sweet, and often used in Mediterranean cuisine.

It looks like a white or pale green bulb which has light green, feathery leaves attached. It is related to parsley, dill, coriander and cucumber.

The flavor of fennel is like no other vegetable. It tastes like anise, but sweeter. Almost the entire plant can be eaten, leaves and stalks as a vegetable, or leaves chopped and added to another dish at the end for additional flavor.

Fennel's Fat Fighting Benefits

Fennel is a great digestive aid, helping to metabolize fats after meals.

The vegetable contains phytonutrients and flavonoids, like quercetin, rutin and kaempferol glycosides. These give fennel its strong antioxidant properties.

The phytonutrient anethole in fennel has been proven to reduce inflammation and prevent cancer. The volatile oil it produces also protects test animal livers from cancer, giving hope for such benefits in humans.

Vitamin C in fennel is a very powerful antioxidant and antimicrobial that protects the immune system and guards against the damage of free radicals on cells and tissues in the body.

Fennel is a very good source of fiber, which helps to reduce cholesterol as well as to remove potentially harmful toxins from the colon. This may help prevent colon cancer. And fennel is also a very good source of folate, a B vitamin that converts homocysteine into benign molecules.

The mineral potassium in fennel reduces blood pressure, offering protection against heart attack and stroke.

Fennel is also a good source for magnesium, copper, iron, phosphorus, niacin, manganese, molybdenum and manganese.

How To Prepare Fennel

Fennel sprigs are used to accent grilled shrimp, braised lamb shanks and other dishes.

Grill fennel to use in salads. Or dice and stuff into fresh fish before cooking.

In Italy, many cooks bake or braise fennel as a vegetable accompaniment to fish and meat dishes. Try braised fennel with scallops. And salmon with fennel is simply wonderful.

Use fennel in salad dressings.

Eat the bulb raw or slightly cooked in stews and salads. Leek, fennel and potato soup is simply delicious!

Sauté fennel and onions for a delicious side dish.

Or combine fennel, oranges and avocado for a tasty salad. Thinly slice fennel and add to yogurt and mint leaves.

Add sliced fennel, along with lettuce and tomato, for your sandwiches.

Fennel seeds are often used to spice up sausage, red meat, fish dishes and pickles.

How Much To Eat

A little bit of fennel goes a long way. One small bulb, trimmed, cored and cut into ¼-inch dices, will make one cup, which is a good serving size, especially if you add it to soup.

Green And Wax (String or Snapping) Beans

Green beans, also called string beans or snapping beans, are actually a pod-shaped legume that's eaten as a vegetable in the USA. They're called string beans because earlier varieties of the plant had a fibrous string that ran along the seam of the bean. The snap nickname comes from the sound of the bean when you snap it in two.

Varieties of string or snapping beans include Blue Lake, flat or Romano, purple (which look the same as green beans when cooked), yard-long, yellow or wax, Baby French, haricot and Chinese long beans. The stringless bean was introduced in 1894.

Green And Wax Beans' Fat Fighting Benefits

Green (and wax) beans are low in calories and sodium, and high in fiber, water, and an excellent source of many fat burning nutrients. They are loaded with Vitamins C, K and A, potassium, fiber, folate and iron. They're also a great source of calcium, phosphorus, omega-3 fatty acids, niacin, magnesium, riboflavin, copper and thiamin.

Potassium, magnesium and calcium help to reduce your blood pressure. Vitamin C offers fantastic protection against free radical damage, stimulates your metabolism, and also wards off infection. Vitamin A also wards off infection and helps to

free your system of toxins. The combination of these two nutrients makes a potent anti-oxidant fighting team to help your body reduce any amounts of free radicals. Vitamin C is a water soluble antioxidant and the beta carotene concentration in Vitamin A is a fat soluble antioxidant. They both help prevent the oxidation of cholesterol. Oxidized cholesterol can stick to blood vessel walls and build up blockages that lead to stroke or heart attack. So, eating one cup of green beans is a great deterrent to these ailments along with their potent Fat Fighting Benefits.

Fiber in green and wax beans helps you feel full, clings to bile to speed toxins out of your body and helps with food digestion.

Beans also contain two amino acids: aspartic acid, that works to help the liver remove excess ammonia and toxins from the bloodstream, and glutamic acid, which helps metabolize sugars and fats.

One caution is that persons with existing and untreated kidney or gallbladder disease should probably avoid eating green beans, since they contain oxalates, a naturally occurring substance in human beings, animals and plants. When oxalates get overly concentrated in human body fluids, they could crystallize and cause health problems.

How To Prepare Green And Wax Beans

Green and wax beans should be washed in cold water just before using. Allow them to soak and the soil fall to the bottom of the sink, and then gently lift them out. Rinse them several times in more cold water to remove any residual dirt. They can be stored in the refrigerator for several days in a plastic bag.

Cook in a small amount of boiling water (about one inch of water in the bottom of a pan for one pound of beans). Cook uncovered for a few minutes to allow the bean acids to escape in steam, then cover and cook until desired tenderness. The beans will retain their bright green (or yellow color). Remember that purple beans when cooked will turn green. Also, beans continue to cook when they're removed from heat, so you may wish to cook until almost done, then submerge

them in a bath of ice water to stop further cooking. Overheating not only discolors beans, it also makes them limp and unappealing.

Since boiling beans makes them lose some of their nutrient value, try to re-use the water for another vegetable. Or, better yet, steam the beans instead.

Green beans are a wonderful side vegetable dish to your main entrée. They also are terrific addition to green or pasta salads.

Add the healthy and delicious crunch of fresh green or wax beans to your favorite soup or stew.

Serve green or wax beans with a sprinkling of lemon juice for a tangy treat.

Beans are also great in a stir-fry.

Try a green and yellow bean salad with chopped green onions and a dressing of olive oil, red wine vinegar, Dijon mustard and ground black pepper.

How Much To Eat

A typical serving is about one cup of beans per person. If you're adding to a salad, just lay on the number that looks pleasing. Of course, a bean salad will contain more beans, but putting beans atop a green salad is more for crunch and visual appeal.

Hot Green And Red Chili Peppers

Chili peppers have a reputation for being ultra hot, even red hot. Of course, there are varieties of hot chili peppers that deserve this reputation. This is due to the amount of capsaicin they contain. But not all hot chili peppers are that strong. There are others that are sweet, mild or very richly flavored.

The hotness of the chili pepper is contained in the veins near the heart of the pepper, not in the seeds as most people believe. The seeds will taste hot if they are in close contact with the veins.

The difference between a Bell pepper and a Jalapeno pepper or Serrano pepper is that bell peppers lack the gene that transmits capsaicinoids. The measurement to determine the “heat” in chili peppers is called the Scoville scale.

There are more than 40 varieties of hot chili peppers grown in Mexico. In the United States, these peppers are most often used: sweet Italian bell, peperoncini cherry, New Mexico, Pasilla Poblano Ancho, Rocotillo, Jalapeno Chipotle Guajillo, Yellow Wax, Serrano, and Habanero. Of these, the Serrano and Habanero are the hottest on the Scoville scale. Serrano chili peppers rate a 10,000-23,000 Scoville units, while Habanero ranks at 325,000 and up on the Scoville scale. That’s hot! Habanero chili peppers are the hottest pepper known to man.

Hot Green And Red Chili Peppers’ Fat Fighting Benefits

Outside of their heat, and maybe because of it, hot chili peppers help you to lose weight by increasing your metabolism.

Did you know that, ounce for ounce, green chili peppers have more Vitamin C than citrus fruits?

One teaspoon of hot sauce (from hot chili peppers) can provide 100% of your daily requirement of Vitamin A. Chili peppers, especially red chili peppers, contain more Vitamin A than carrots.

The capsaicin in hot chili peppers has long been associated with a number of cures. Its properties have been proven to lower blood pressure, reducing cholesterol and staving off heart attack and stroke. It also speeds up your metabolism, burns fat, prevents against colds and fevers, and acts as a deterrent to cancer. It also provides pain relief.

Potassium in hot chili peppers lowers blood pressure, regulates fluid balance in the body and guards against tissue and cell damage.

The amino acid, aspartic acid, in hot chili peppers, assists with digestive enzymes, and to obtain energy from glucose. Glutamic acid in hot chili peppers stabilizes sugar cravings and fluctuating energy levels.

The high levels of lutein in hot chili peppers are great for eyes, helping to ward off macular degeneration and cataracts.

How To Prepare Hot Green And Red Chili Peppers

Always use caution when handling hot chili peppers. The hotter the pepper, the more careful you need to be. The capsaicin in the peppers can actually cause severe burns. Don't touch your face or eyes, and wear protective coverings on your hands. If your hands come into contact with the chili peppers, wash your hands thoroughly in warm soapy water. If burning continues, then soak your hands in milk. Also watch out for chili dust when preparing meals, since the dust can also irritate your eyes and throat.

How Much To Eat

One half cup chopped or diced hot chili peppers are a good serving size. Of course, if you're using in recipes for more than one person, adjust the amount according to taste and heat preference.

Jicama

Jicama is from the legume or bean family, and is native to Mexico and Central America where it is a dietary staple. Its many names include yambean, Mexican potato, Mexican yam bean, saa got, ahipa, lo bok, Chinese turnip and Chinese potato.

It looks similar to a turnip (or even a very large radish, just to give you a picture), is usually thin-skinned in gray, tan or brown color. It has a short root and very white flesh. The taste is sweet and starchy, somewhere between that of an apple, a pear and a radish. Jicama is often used in place of water chestnuts. It is widely available in the USA year-round.

Jicama's Fat Fighting Benefits

Jicama is low in fat, sodium and calories and high in Vitamin C and fiber. It's also a good source of potassium.

Potassium helps maintain fluid balance and control blood pressure. Fiber helps to bind to bile to speed away toxins and aid digestion. Vitamin C's many Fat Fighting Benefits include its potent antioxidant properties that fight free radical damage as well as its anti-inflammatory abilities.

Jicama also contains inulin, a natural soluble dietary fiber. Inulin in jicama increases activity of beneficial bacteria in the gut. It does this by acting as a probiotic or food to the gut's good bacteria. This aids in digestion.

Inulin also keeps good bacteria alive and working well in order to promote digestive health. This also prevents harmful bacteria from getting a chance to grow in the gut. Recent studies have shown that inulin also promotes bone strength, helps reduce cholesterol and controls your body's blood sugar levels.

How To Prepare Jicama

To serve jicama, first wash and then remove the peel (including the fibrous flesh that's just under the skin). Do this just before you use it since air will cause the jicama to discolor.

Cut or slice or grate jicama to use in salads, or in place of water chestnuts for a delicious taste treat.

You can add a squeeze of lime juice and a dash of chili powder to cubed jicama for an interesting and nutritious appetizer.

You can also sauté or stir-fry jicama since it remains crisp and crunchy even after cooking (just like water chestnuts).

One jicama that weighs one pound will come out to about three cups chopped or shredded.

When shopping for jicama, look for ones that are solid, heavy, well-formed roots that are free of any discolorations or cracks. Did you know that jicama can be eaten in any stage? There are some jicama that weigh up to 50 pounds! Most of the jicama sold in markets averages 3-5 pounds.

Jicama can be stored for a long time in the refrigerator, although the starch will turn to sugar after extended periods. So, it's best to eat the jicama within a couple of weeks of purchase.

How Much To Eat

Average serving size is about one cup of jicama.

Kale

Kale is a leafy green vegetable. Kale is part of the same cabbage family that includes cabbage, collards, Brussels sprouts, kohlrabi, broccoli and cauliflower. They appear very different today, but that's due to selective propagation and human cultivation over thousands of years.

Although available throughout the year, kale's best market time is mid-winter through the beginning of spring. It grows best in cooler temperatures where light frost produces very tender and sweet leaves.

The flavor of kale is mild and earthy. There are several kale varieties, including purple, bluegreen, gray-green or bluish-green colored.

Kale's Fat Fighting Benefits

Kale is fat-free and cholesterol-free. But its largest benefit to a fat burning regimen is that it's literally loaded with health-promoting vitamins, minerals and nutrients.

Kale contains phytonutrients that include glucosinolates and methyl cysteine sulfoxides that activate your body's liver detoxifying enzymes. This helps to neutralize any carcinogenic substances present in the body.

One glucosinolate phytonutrient, sulforaphane, boosts these detoxifying enzymes (perhaps by altering their gene expression). Sulforaphane triggers the liver to produce the enzymes as well as inhibits susceptibility to colon cancers.

Phytonutrients in kale also act as powerful antioxidants to fight against free radical damage to the body's DNA. Recent comprehensive studies have shown that

persons who consumed cruciferous vegetables such as kale have a reduced risk of prostate, colorectal, lung, breast and other cancers.

The high carotenoid content of kale (especially lutein and zeaxanthin) helps prevent damage to the eyes from exposure to excessive amounts of ultraviolet light. This protects against cataracts.

Kale is an excellent source of Vitamin A and beta carotene, both extremely important to healthy vision, and protecting against cancer, especially skin cancer.

Among kale's other vital nutrients are excellent amounts of Vitamin C (a potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory), Vitamin B-6 and manganese. Vitamin C, the primary water-soluble antioxidant in the human body, disarms free radicals before they can do damage. In the digestive system, this prevents DNA mutations that can cause cancer. And free radicals also oxidize cholesterol, which leads to cholesterol buildup on artery walls. Vitamin C combats that, preventing cholesterol oxidation.

The trace mineral manganese helps your body to produce energy it gets from protein and carbohydrates. It's also important for maintaining a healthy nervous system and for protecting against damage from free radicals produced during production of energy.

Fiber in kale helps keep blood sugar levels stable, helps reduce cholesterol and provides colon protection from cancer-causing cells.

Kale is also a good source for copper, calcium and potassium (to regulate blood pressure and maintain fluid balance).

How To Prepare Kale

When buying kale, look for deeply-colored, firm leaves and moist and hardy stems. Don't buy kale that's been left in the sun, since this will cause it to wilt and affect its flavor negatively. Kale should be stored in cooler temperatures. Also make sure there's no sign of small holes or yellow or browning leaves. And choose smaller sized leaves, since these will be the tenderest.

Wrap kale in a paper towel that you dampen with water and store it in the refrigerator's crisper drawer. Don't wash until you're ready to use or it will become limp. It's best to eat kale within one or two days after you buy it. The longer you wait the more bitter the kale will taste.

Wash kale leaves thoroughly in cool running water in your sink. You can eat both the leaves and the stems of the plant, but remove any roots that remain.

Kale leaves that are young are best eaten raw in salads.

Saute kale with some fresh garlic. Sprinkle with a few drops of lemon and serve as a vegetable accompaniment to a meal.

Another serving idea is to braise chopped apples and kale. Sprinkle with balsamic vinegar and add a few walnuts and serve.

Steamed kale makes a wonderful bed for poached eggs.

You can even add kale to vegetable soups and stews for a delicious taste sensation.

How Much To Eat

One serving size of kale is about one cup.

Leeks

Leeks are closely related to onions, garlic and scallions. They look like an overgrown scallion, in fact, with their flattened, wide leaves and a stalk that's thick and white. They are generally blue-green, although some are purple. Leeks taste mild and sweet and add a nice flavor to the foods it's cooked with.

Leeks' Fat Fighting Benefits

Leeks supply loads of potassium, which regulates body fluids, helps maintain stable blood pressure levels, reduces high cholesterol, and wards off inflammation.

They also contain some folic acid, Vitamin C and beta carotene in the stems.

Leeks also help to dispose of uric acid, which is beneficial to sufferers of arthritis.

How To Prepare Leeks

When shopping for leeks, look for ones that have a stalk less than 1-1/2 inches in length. This will ensure that they are tender and of delicate flavor. You want to have greens that are unblemished.

Leeks can be stored in the refrigerator for about one week before they start to spoil. Make sure to keep them in a closed but roomy and airtight container so they won't affect nearby food with the odor.

Wash leeks thoroughly to remove residual dirt and grime that hides in the leaves. Remove any outer leaves that look old and trim off both ends of the plant.

You can cook leeks and serve them as is, whole, or sliced, diced or chopped and added to salads, casseroles, stews, soups, mixed vegetables, quiches and many other dishes. Avoid overcooking, however, or you'll wind up with a mushy mess.

Potato and leek soup is very delicious and nutritious and tastes just as good cold as it does hot.

How Much To Eat

One leek per serving is about right. Of course, if you're cooking according to a recipe, adjust the number of leeks per number of servings.

Lettuce

Lettuce is from the sunflower family. It is one of the oldest vegetables with origins believed to be in the Mediterranean. It is a very popular vegetable, second only to potatoes in the United States in terms of vegetable consumption.

There are four main lettuce types, including head lettuce (also called iceberg), loose leaf, butterhead and romaine. There are also baby greens, or baby lettuce or mesclun, which is actually a mixture of baby spinach, baby romaine, arugula and radicchio. Did you know that the state of California produces 70% of iceberg lettuce sold in the U.S.? Arizona produces the other 30%.

Romaine lettuce got its name from the Romans. They believed it contained healthy properties.

Lettuce is extremely perishable, and is harvested by hand, immediately box-packed and taken to cooling warehouses or salad production factories. In fact, 25% of all lettuce in the USA goes into fresh-cut, bagged salads.

Lettuce's Fat Fighting Benefits

Iceberg lettuce has the lowest amounts of nutritional value. In fact, it's much better to buy and use romaine, leaf and butterhead lettuce instead.

And the darker, outer leaves contain the most nutrients, so try to save and use as much of these as possible. The exception is the very tip of romaine and the hard, coarse outer ribs, which may release an unpleasant taste. Rip around those for the best part of the romaine leaves.

No matter the variety, all lettuce is low-calorie, low-fat and low sodium, and is high in Vitamins A, B-6, C and K, and is an excellent source of minerals like calcium, iron, thiamin, potassium and manganese as well as folate, beta carotene and lutein and zeaxanthin.

Magnesium and iron in lettuce enters the spleen and boosts immunity, protecting the body from illness. Lettuce also promotes an increase in metabolism in the liver to wash away fatty cells.

With the exception of butterhead lettuce, romaine and leaf lettuce varieties also contain the amino acids arginine, isoleucine, leucine, glycine, valine, tryptophan, methionine, tyrosine and aspartic and glutamic acid, among others.

Tyrosine is an antioxidant that helps to regulate blood pressure and assists in your body's production of red and white blood cells. Methionine helps maintain fluid balance in the body. Glycine is important for the production of bile salts needed for digestion and also helps to stabilize your body's blood sugar levels. Valine helps counter low blood sugar as well as maintaining muscle tissue mass (very important after vigorous exercising). Alanine is a powerful detoxifier, produces

energy from your body's glucose, helps regulate blood cholesterol and also helps with persons susceptible to hypoglycemia.

Isoleucine helps with low blood sugar and with muscle recovery (particularly following exercise). Leucine also assists with low blood sugar and helps your body to rebuild muscle tissue.

Aspartic acid gleans energy from glucose and assists in digestion through production of essential enzymes. It's also a powerful detoxifier that works with the liver to get rid of excess ammonia and other toxins from your bloodstream.

Glutamic acid also helps digestion by providing a fuel source for the cells lining the intestines. In addition, glutamic acid is required by white blood cells and provides excellent immune system protection. But glutamic acid's most important function for your fat burning process is its ability to metabolize sugars and fats.

Tryptophan, another amino acid, helps control your sugar cravings.

How To Prepare Lettuce

Lettuce is extremely versatile, tastes delicious and offers great nutrition in those leafs! Salads are the first thing that comes to mind with lettuce, and that's their primary purpose in most American households. But lettuce offers us so many more dining possibilities.

Use lettuce leaves as a delicious and crunchy wrap for your favorite edibles – grilled chicken, water-packed tuna, grilled salmon – you name it. The varieties you can use, even within the same plate, make for colorful, beautiful taste treats. Romaine, bib, leaf, and baby lettuces all taste and look great!

Place some low-fat cottage cheese on a bed of lettuce and add some fresh fruit for a delicious and nutritious snack or lunch.

A bed of lettuce – again, almost any kind – makes a wonderfully appetizing and striking platform for grilled chicken, salmon or almost any fresh fish.

Use baby lettuces instead of leaf lettuce or a bun and add your grilled turkey burger on top.

When you shop for lettuce, always look for crisp heads (or loose leaves) that are blemish-free. When you're ready to use, wash lettuce three times at least under cool running water. This is critically important because lettuce is easily contaminated. In fact more than 62 chemical agents are used on lettuce, the most harmful of which is Permethrin. Washing thoroughly is your only defense. To avoid pesticides and herbicides, make sure to buy only certified organic, but do always wash three times.

Try to avoid cut, bagged salads, since cut lettuce tends to lose its nutrition faster. But if you do buy bagged lettuce, even organic, and even if it says it's already been washed three times, wash it again yourself just to be safe. Use a salad spinner to get it completely dry. Wet lettuce dilutes flavor of any dressing and runs on the plate whereas dry lettuce allows all the flavors to shine!

To avoid brown edges on your lettuce, always tear it, don't cut it. You can store washed and dried greens in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for about 5 days. This depends on the variety, so you shouldn't leave it uninspected for days on end. It's best to use lettuce while it's fresh!

Also, another tip to lettuce storage is to line your refrigerator's drawer with paper towels. This helps blot any escaping moisture and prevents rust from forming.

Remember that the outer leaves of lettuce contain more nutrients than the inner ones.

How Much To Eat

It's easy to eat 1-2 cups of lettuce per day, in salads, sandwiches, used as wraps. They also make a delicious bed for grilled salmon or chicken.

Mushrooms

Mushrooms, eaten as a vegetable, are not really a vegetable at all. They are actually a fungus.

While there are over 30,000 mushroom varieties, not all of them are edible. Some are even quite toxic. In markets today, here are some of the most commonly seen

varieties of mushrooms: white (or button), chanterelles, crimini (or Italian brown), enoki, morel, oyster, porcini, Portobello and shitake.

Mushrooms' Fat Fighting Benefits

Mushrooms are low in calories, cholesterol-free, and almost no sodium or fat. They also contain essential minerals like selenium, which works in concert with Vitamin E to produce potent antioxidants that fight against free radical damage to the body's cells.

Studies show that selenium in mushrooms can reduce the risk of cancer, cardiovascular disease, and may reduce the severity of other diseases such as asthma, rheumatoid arthritis and pancreatitis.

The potassium content of mushrooms is excellent for your heart. It helps reduce the risk of stroke and high blood pressure. And the copper and iron in mushrooms help produce red blood cells that deliver oxygen to the body.

Niacin aids your digestive and nervous system. Pantothenic acid assists hormone production and the nervous system. Riboflavin promotes healthy skin and vision. The three together, riboflavin, niacin and Pantothenic acid, work to release energy from fat, proteins and carbohydrates in food.

Mushrooms are actually one of the best sources of niacin. And the vitamin content in mushrooms is similar to that found in meat.

One Portobello mushroom has more potassium than a banana.

How To Prepare Mushrooms

Clean mushrooms when you are ready to use them. Remove any debris and rinse with cold running water and pat dry.

When shopping for mushrooms, look for firm mushrooms without moisture and firm caps. No mold. Place them in a paper bag in the refrigerator, where they'll stay fresh for about five days.

How do you use mushrooms? There are literally thousands of recipes that call for mushrooms. They're great added to salads, soups and pasta. Add them to a vegetable platter. Sauté some mushrooms and onions to top a turkey burger or other meat.

Grill mushrooms on kebabs along with peppers, onions, chicken and other fixings.

Don't forget to add mushrooms to stir-frys!

As for particular mushrooms, shitakes are great in stews, stir-frys and as a meat substitute. Portobello is wonderful to grill or roast. The chewy texture of oyster mushrooms is suitable for cooking and porcinis are considered one of the finest tasting mushrooms. Use enoki in salads and morels for stews and sauces. White or button and chanterelles are great eaten fresh and raw.

How Much To Eat

One cup of pieces is a good serving size. You can also consume 1/2 cup, depending on size and method of preparation. Many recipes specify exactly how much mushrooms to use.

Okra

Okra is a vegetable, a member of the mallow family that includes hollyhock, cotton and hibiscus. It is rough, green and pod-shaped with many seeds. The seed pods, when cut, secrete a gluey juice which is used to thicken stews, particularly chicken stew or gumbo.

The taste is somewhere between that of an eggplant and asparagus.

Okra's Fat Fighting Benefits

Okra is cholesterol-free, fat-free, low-sodium, and a good source of Vitamins A, B-complex, and C, along with iron and calcium. It is also low in calories and a good source of dietary fiber.

It is also a good source of magnesium and folate.

The fiber in okra helps to stabilize blood sugar. It does this by curbing the rate at which sugar is absorbed into the intestinal tract.

The sticky part of okra binds to cholesterol and bile and helps speed toxins away from the liver.

Okra fiber, since it absorbs water and promotes bulk in stools, is a good preventive for constipation. Okra's fiber is among the best natural foods you can ingest for elimination of toxins, due to its slippery consistency (which, admittedly, is an acquired taste) that helps flush away toxins.

And the good news about okra's fiber continues. It actually feeds the good bacteria or probiotics in the intestinal tract.

How To Prepare Okra

Okra is excellent when sautéed. One recipe calls for sautéed corn, okra and onion. Okra is a main ingredient in many Caribbean, African, Middle Eastern, Greek, Turkish and Indian recipes.

Use it raw in salads.

Avoid long cooking time, unless you're making soups and stews like chicken gumbo. This is because the juice secreted from the seed pods is very thick and sticky and acts like a thickener.

Okra's flavor blends very well with tomatoes, so you can serve chopped okra with sliced tomatoes as a side dish.

Use okra in place of eggplant in recipes that call for eggplant. Its taste is very similar.

When shopping for okra, purchase firm, tender and young pods that snap easily in half. Look for a rich green color and avoid any that are limp, have blemishes, or look dull or dry.

Make sure you store okra in a paper bag in a warmer part of your refrigerator, since cold storage damages it. Use within 2-3 days of purchase.

How Much To Eat

One half cup of sliced okra is considered an average serving.

Onions – Sweet, Spring, Yellow, Red and White

Onions are a vegetable that come from the Alliaceae family, which also includes garlic, shallots, leeks and the herb chives.

The onion varieties include sweet onions, like Vidalias, green onions, red, yellow (or Spanish) and white onions.

Yellow onions are perfect for cooking and are known for their full flavor. These onions turn a rich dark brown when cooked and have a tangy sweet flavor that's ideal for French Onion soup.

Red onions are great for both fresh as well as grilling. White onions are traditionally used in Mexican cuisine and have a sweet flavor and golden color when they are sautéed.

There are also small pearl onions, cultivated specifically for their small size and use in various recipes such as vegetable dishes or as a garnish.

Sweet onions have many varieties including Vidalia, Walla Walla, Bermuda, Maui, Texas, Carzalla and Imperial, among others.

Onions' Fat Fighting Benefits

Onions are low in calories and fat-free, sodium-free, and cholesterol-free. They provide dietary fiber, Vitamins B-6 and C, along with potassium and as many as 150 phytochemicals.

The flavonoid quercetin, which is an antioxidant, found in onions, fights off free radicals in the body. Quercetin also protects and regenerates Vitamin E in the body, helps to detoxify the body from harmful effects of heavy metals, and also inhibits low-density lipoprotein oxidation.

The body can obtain quercetin from other sources such as tea and apples, but there's ample research that shows the quercetin obtained from onions is twice that from tea and 3+ times that from apples.

Science also points up onions' potentially beneficial effects in preventing cancer, specifically stomach cancer.

Onions also appear to benefit cholesterol and blood pressure levels in the body. This is due to their organosulfur compounds. Eating onions daily can help raise the good (HDL) cholesterol in your body and protect against heart attack and stroke.

In addition, onions may prevent asthma attacks and inflammation. And other studies show that onions can offer protection against cataracts.

How To Prepare Onions

When purchasing onions, you want to look for dry outer skins that are free of mold, discoloration, soft spots or blemishes. Make sure they feel heavy for their size and don't smell particularly strong.

Always store onions in a cool, dry place (except for green onions, which must be refrigerated). Use within a few months, although they will keep for up to six months. But fresh onions are better – both for taste and nutritional value.

Sweet onions are excellent when eaten raw, chopped fresh and added to salads, turkey burgers or as an addition to almost any sandwich (including lettuce wraps). You can lightly cook them to bring out their inherent sweet and mild taste.

Pearl onions are often used in vegetable dishes or as garnish for cocktails.

Add green onions raw to salads, coleslaw, potato salad or lightly sautéed or cooked in recipes. They're also terrific in stir-fry and tabbouleh.

White and yellow onions are the standard version of onion that most cooks use. Their flavor ranges from mild to sharp and their versatility in the kitchen is leg-

end. Use them in salads, soups, stews, accompaniment to meat, fish, and poultry or even as a side-dish.

The list of recipes that call for onions is almost endless, so consider that onions are almost a necessary ingredient in everything but dessert. Did you know there's even onion jam?

How Much To Eat

One medium onion yields about one cup of chopped onion. Depending on what you're eating, you may eat one slice of red onion, a couple of tablespoons of chopped or grated onion, or use a whole onion or more for various recipes. It's really a matter of taste. You can't go wrong with onions!

Pumpkin

Pumpkin is a vegetable that belongs to the same family as squashes and gourds. The pumpkin grows on a long, spreading vine with big flowers and clinging tendrils.

The skin is usually red, but there are some varieties that have green skin. The flesh inside is usually a bright orange color.

Pumpkin is a winter vegetable. Fresh pumpkin is available in fall and early winter.

Pumpkin's Fat Fighting Benefits

Low in fat (one cup contains less than one gram of fat), cholesterol-free, low-calorie and low-sodium (only two grams per one cup), pumpkin is also high in protein and brimming with essential minerals, especially calcium, zinc, iron, copper, phosphorus, magnesium and potassium and essential fatty acids.

Pumpkin is also a good source of Vitamin C and folate. It also contains tremendous amounts of lutein and zeaxanthin, which offer protection against cataracts and macular degeneration.

Pumpkin's bright orange color is an indication of the fact that it's loaded with the important antioxidant beta carotene. The beta carotene in pumpkin is converted to Vitamin A in the human body where it performs many vital functions in overall health.

Beta carotene-rich foods may help reduce the risk of developing various cancers, as well as provides protection against heart disease and stroke. Beta carotene also protects against the effects of aging, particularly the degenerative effects, and may offer protection against other diseases.

How To Prepare Pumpkin

Choose pumpkins that are firm, heavy and blemish free. Handle with care and store for up to three months in a cool, dry place.

Once you cut pumpkin, it must be eaten within one week. Keep cut pumpkin in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.

Cutting pumpkin may prove to be a challenge. You will need a sharp knife with a long handle. First, however, be sure to rinse off the entire pumpkin in cool water to remove any residual dirt. Cut into pieces and then remove the skin, seeds and pulp. You can also cook the entire pumpkin and remove the seeds, pulp and skin afterwards. Be sure to poke holes in the pumpkin to allow steam to escape and remove from the oven when the pumpkin is caramelized.

Pumpkin can be boiled or steamed and smash or puree to put into soup. Mash it for a vegetable side dish.

There's always the ubiquitous pumpkin pie, but also try delicious pumpkin muffins, low-fat cakes and other pumpkin recipes.

How Much To Eat

One cup mashed pumpkin is a good serving size for one person.

Radishes

Radish is a vegetable that is available year-round, although it is generally a cool season plant. The most popular variety in the United States is the Red Globe, although radishes also come in white, black, green, pink, purple, red and white and orange. They are known as summer radishes and winter radishes. There are also Chinese and Japanese (daikon) radishes.

Summer radishes are smaller, in bright and bold red, pink, purple, and white or red and white. Their shape can be elongated or round, with either a mild or fiery hot taste.

Winter radishes have a very pungent flavor and may be green, black or white.

Chinese radishes, round and fat, are very mild in flavor. Daikon, which means green root in Japanese, come in several varieties, including thin and long ones to short and round versions.

Radishes' Fat Fighting Benefits

Radishes are low-calorie, fat-free, cholesterol-free and an excellent source of Vitamin C and folate, as well as the minerals calcium, magnesium, phosphorus and potassium and beta carotene and lutein. They contain good amounts of selenium, Vitamin A, manganese, copper and zinc.

The magnesium and iron content in radishes scrub the body's mucous membrane and help to dissolve fat present in cells.

Radishes lowers the appetite, help with digestion and respiratory problems, and are a great fat burning boost.

Flavonoids (along with Vitamin C) in radishes help support capillary structure in the human body. Folic acid, beta carotene and Vitamin C help to effectively lower high levels of dangerous homocysteine in the body.

Potassium lowers blood pressure and cholesterol in the body and prevents the development of heart attack and stroke.

Vitamin C is a very powerful antioxidant that stimulates energy production and boosts the body's metabolism, thus burning fat.

Radishes also contain sulfurous content, which may offer protection against cancer, according to recent research.

How To Prepare Radishes

Choose medium size radishes that are rich in color on the root, whatever the variety (except white, which should look white). Make sure the radishes are firm and the healthy looking greens rich and not wilted.

All radishes store very well in the refrigerator (remove the tops first) in plastic bags for about one week. Winter radishes last for up to two weeks.

Did you know that you can revive radishes that seem less than firm? Just plunge them into ice water for 1-2 hours before you serve them.

Add radish leaves to fresh salads or stir fry for a delicious taste treat. It adds a nice zesty flavor that's not quite as spicy as the radish itself.

Radishes are most often served as a garnish to other vegetable dishes or added to salads.

Grate radishes into bean salads or pasta. Choose an array of different colored radishes for a visual and tasty vegetable tray.

Add white radishes to a vegetable soup for a crunchy taste surprise.

How Much To Eat

How much you eat depends on your liking for the taste and crunch. An average serving is anywhere from 3-4 whole radishes to a cup of slices added to salads. Since they're so low fat (only .12 grams in one cup of slices), you can eat them as often as you like!

Snow Peas

Snow peas are a type of legume, eaten as a vegetable. They are edible, flat pods with 5-7 seeds and are about 2-3 inches in length. Since they are not opaque, you can actually see the seeds inside the green outer covering.

The taste of the seeds inside is sweet and starchy.

They are available year-round.

Snow Peas' Fat Fighting Benefits

Snow peas are fat-free, saturated fat-free, cholesterol-free, low-calorie, low-sodium and an excellent source of Vitamins A and C and fiber.

The insoluble fiber in snow peas greatly aids digestive processes and may also help to lower cholesterol. They also contain the important nutrient iron, which is not found in many plant sources and is vital to bone-building strength.

Snow peas' iron and Vitamin C, a powerful antioxidant, help to maintain your body's immune system. The peas have abundant lutein, a carotenoid with tremendous protective properties against macular degeneration and cataracts.

Potassium in snow peas helps to regulate body fluids, to lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

The Vitamin K in green peas helps to maintain bone health, activating osteocalcin, which is bones' major non-collagen protein. Vitamin K also helps with the body's blood clotting ability.

Folic acid and Vitamin B-6 help reduce the build-up of high homocysteine levels in the body which can lead to atherosclerosis, heart attack and stroke. The combination of folic acid and Vitamin B-6 in snow peas promotes healthy heart functioning.

The nutrients of thiamin, riboflavin, Vitamin B-6 and niacin also play a key role in the metabolism of carbohydrates, proteins and lipids in the body. The mineral iron in snow peas helps with the formation and function of normal blood cells.

How To Prepare Snow Peas

Snow peas can be found in the produce section of most supermarkets. Look for crisp, bright-colored pods that have small seeds and leaflets that look fresh. While they will keep in the refrigerator in a plastic bag for about three days, it's best to use them fresh.

Before you use them, pinch off the ends and rinse the peas in running water.

Try them in stir fry dishes, with shitake mushrooms, sweet peppers and onions. Add them to salads along with grapefruit slices and greens.

They're also great as a side dish to your main entrée.

How Much To Eat

One half cup is an average serving size.

Spaghetti (Or Winter) Squash

Spaghetti squash, also known as winter squash, is a yellow, oval-shaped vegetable. The spaghetti squash generally averages about nine inches in length and may weigh 2-3 pounds. The name spaghetti refers to the flesh of the vegetable, which resembles long, spaghetti-like strings.

Spaghetti squash is a member of the gourd family of vegetables. There are several varieties of winter squash, including acorn, buttercup, butternut, hubbard, pumpkin, spaghetti and turban. There are even other varieties: calabaza, cushaw, delicate, golden nugget, kabocha and vegetable marrow.

Spaghetti Squash's Fat Fighting Benefits

Spaghetti squash is a low-fat, low-sodium, cholesterol free vegetable that's rich in Vitamins A and C, and an excellent source of potassium, dietary fiber and manganese. It is also a very good source for Vitamin B-1, B-6, copper, niacin, Pantothenic acid, folate and omega-3 fatty acids.

The abundant levels of Vitamin C and beta carotene in spaghetti squash are potent anti-inflammatory and antioxidants. Beta carotene prevents oxidation of

cholesterol in the body, thus reducing the possibility of heart attack and stroke. The antioxidant properties also prevent free radical damage to cells in the body, help regulate blood pressure and reduce the risk of colon cancer as well as lung cancer.

In addition, the beta carotene and lutein in spaghetti squash lower the risk of macular degeneration and cataracts. The eyes are strengthened as a result of these two ingredients in spaghetti squash.

The carbohydrates in spaghetti squash are efficient fuel for energy production. This can also be stored in the muscles and liver as glycogen to help with prolonged physical exercise.

Potassium also lowers blood pressure and high cholesterol levels, adding to the protective benefits to the heart. It also reduces urinary excretion of calcium, thus lowering the risk of kidney stone formation.

Fiber and folate in spaghetti squash help to protect the colon from cancer-causing chemicals. Folate helps break down high and dangerous levels of homocystein in the body. This can protect against heart attack and stroke.

How To Prepare Spaghetti Squash

Spaghetti squash can be baked, boiled or steamed.

When shopping for spaghetti squash, look for dull, not glossy gourds. They should be firm and feel heavy for their size. Since they are prone to decay, inspect the squash very carefully before you buy. Make sure the rind is hard, since a soft rind indicates that the insides are watery and lack flavor. Avoid those that have any signs of decay, such as water-soaked areas or mold.

You can store spaghetti squash for one week to six months, as long as it's in a cool, dry area that averages about 50-60 degrees. Once it's cut, however, wrap it in plastic and keep in the refrigerator for 1-2 days.

When you're ready to use, wash the squash carefully to remove dirt and particles, cut it in half and remove seeds and fibrous cavity material. Use it peeled or unpeeled, according to the directions of the recipe you're following.

Since spaghetti squash looks just like spaghetti, consider topping it with your favorite pasta sauce (home-made is even better!).

Cut into cubes and steam. Then toss with olive oil, ginger, tamari and pumpkin seeds.

Add maple syrup and cinnamon to halved, baked spaghetti squash.

Scoop out the flesh and puree with basil, olive oil and garlic until tender.

You can also stuff baked squash with seafood, cheese or seasoned bread cubes.

Cubes of spaghetti squash make a wonderful addition to your favorite vegetable soup or stew!

How Much To Eat

Eat about one cup of spaghetti squash per serving, baked, steamed, cubed or in soups or stews.

Spinach

Spinach is a leafy green vegetable with a delicate texture and color that's a rich jade green. It belongs to the same family as Swiss chard and beets and has a similar taste – the saltiness of Swiss chard and the bitterness of beet greens.

There are three main types of spinach: Savoy, with its crisp, curly leaves and springy texture, smooth-leaf with flat, unwrinkled leaves and semi-Savoy, not as crinkled as Savoy. Baby spinach is prized for its tenderness and sweet taste.

Available year-round, spinach is best in its peak seasons of March through May and September through October.

Spinach's Fat Fighting Benefits

Spinach is high in fiber and carotenoids, Vitamins C and K, iron, niacin and zinc, folic acid, calcium, copper, manganese, magnesium, phosphorus and potassium.

The carotenoid content of spinach has powerful antioxidant properties that protect against cancer of the breast, prostate and stomach.

Did you know that there are 13 different compounds in spinach that act as antioxidant and anti-cancer agents? Researchers have found that extracts from spinach slow down cell division in stomach cancer cells and reduce incidents of skin and breast cancers.

The carotenoid neoxanthin protects against prostate cancer.

Spinach has few equals among vegetables in its excellent source of Vitamin C and Vitamin A in the form of beta carotene. Both these important antioxidant nutrients work together to combat the effects of roaming free radicals before they can do damage to cells. Beta carotene and Vitamin C also have strong anti-inflammatory properties. Vitamin C helps boost your metabolism to burn fats.

Thiamin and riboflavin in spinach assist in converting proteins, fats and carbohydrates into energy. Niacin also produces energy from proteins, fats and carbohydrates, as well as stabilizing cholesterol levels and assisting in cell respiration. Pantothenic acid detoxifies the body, controls fat metabolism, and assists in production of energy and forming antibodies.

Vitamin K, calcium and magnesium assist in strengthening bones. Magnesium also lowers blood pressure levels and helps the body maintain healthy blood clotting function.

Folate in spinach helps the body to convert dangerous homocysteine into benign molecules.

Spinach provides more iron than meat and is fat-free and calorie-free. Iron is an important ingredient in hemoglobin, which transports oxygen throughout the body. Iron is also part of a key enzyme system that produces energy and metabolizes fats.

The essential amino acid arginine is necessary for proper liver functioning and also aids in detoxifying the liver.

Isoleucine, another amino acid present in spinach, helps to regulate blood sugar and energy levels. Aspartic acid helps protect the liver by detoxifying excess ammonia and other toxins from the bloodstream. Glutamic acid assists in the metabolism of fats and sugars.

How To Prepare Spinach

Before you consume spinach, you need to wash it thoroughly. This is to remove the dirt that hides in the leaves and stems. You may wish to trim off the roots and separate the leaves before washing. To clean, place the spinach in a large bowl of cool water and swirl to remove most of the dirt. Then rinse under clear, running cold water. Repeat the process 2-3 times to make sure all the dirt is removed.

To eat the spinach raw, as in salads, dry it thoroughly in a salad spinner or shake it in a colander. If you're going to cook the spinach, you don't need to dry it first.

Spinach is best cooked by quick boiling method. This releases the oxalic acid and makes the spinach taste sweeter.

Serving suggestions include the ever-popular spinach salad. Or, add spinach leaves to other mixed baby greens for a visual and taste treat.

Layer spinach with your other vegetables in lasagna and bake.

Cook spinach with garlic cloves and serve. You can even add some pine nuts for added crunch and taste.

Garlic, lemon juice and olive oil are great additions to cooked spinach.

Place broiled or baked chicken or fish on a bed of steamed or quick-boiled spinach.

Omelettes and frittatas are excellent with cooked spinach.

How Much To Eat

Standard serving size is one cup of spinach, cooked or raw.

Sprouts – Alfalfa, Bean, Broccoli

Sprouts are available in many varieties, alfalfa, bean, broccoli, radish and clover. They are available year-round.

Sprouts' Fat Fighting Benefits

Sprouts are low-calorie, low-fat, cholesterol-free and high sources of fiber. They are easily digestible and the high concentration of enzymes speeds up the digestive process. They are a good source of Vitamin C, a powerful antioxidant that speeds up your metabolism and burns fats and folate.

Sprouts have long been known for their popularity as a health food, but they're also loaded with nutrients. Their curative abilities, especially in alfalfa, broccoli, radish, clover and soybean sprouts, are due to their strong concentrations of phytochemicals that can protect against disease.

The amino acid, canavanine, in alfalfa sprouts, has shown benefits in pancreatic, colon and leukemia cancers.

Plant estrogens in sprouts help increase bone density and formation and help to protect against osteoporosis.

The presence of another compound, saponin, in alfalfa sprouts, lower bad cholesterol and fat (but not the good cholesterol). This makes alfalfa sprouts an excellent protector of the heart.

Sprouts also contain high levels of antioxidants that protect against the effects of aging.

How To Prepare Sprouts

Sprouts are excellent in stir-fry, as a replacement for noodles and rice. Add herbs and spices such as ginger and garlic for a delicious taste treat.

Use sprouts in coleslaw, in green salads, in wraps or sandwiches, in omelettes and other recipes. Sprouts are also wonderful when added to broths.

Look for fresh bean sprouts in the produce aisle of your favorite market. They'll stay fresh in the refrigerator for about five days, but for maximum freshness, eat right away. You want sprouts that are crisp, moist at the roots and have a nice white color.

You can cook sprouts, but only cook them very briefly, like in stir-fry.

How Much To Eat

One cup of sprouts is an average serving size.

Swiss Chard

Swiss chard is a vegetable with a flavor that's similar to spinach and beets. Along with kale, collard and mustard greens, Swiss chard is one of several green leafy vegetables known simply as greens.

Available year-round, Swiss chard's peak season is from June through August.

The tall, leafy green vegetable has a thick, crunchy stalk in white, red or yellow. The leaves are green, wide and shaped like a fan. The leaves and stalk are edible.

Swiss Chard's Fat Fighting Benefits

The anthocyanins and fiber in Swiss chard offer particular protection against digestive tract cancers, specifically colon cancer. New research suggests that Swiss chard may also offer protection to the kidneys in diabetics, due to reduction in serum urea and creatinine levels.

Swiss chard has excellent concentrations of Vitamins A, C, E and K, along with dietary fiber, magnesium, manganese, potassium and iron. The vegetable also has good amounts of Vitamins B-1, B-2 and B-6, as well as folate, biotin, niacin and Pantothenic acid, and copper, calcium, phosphorus, zinc and protein.

Vitamin K is important for bone health maintenance.

Beta carotene helps prevent cancer damage and oxygen-based cell damage. Beta carotene, a member of the carotenoid family, may offer protection against certain types of cancer, such as skin cancer.

Vitamin A helps to counter the effects of smoke on the human body and guards against emphysema.

Magnesium helps to regulate nerve and muscle tone by balancing the body's calcium action.

The water-soluble antioxidant Vitamin C is a potent anti-inflammatory as well. It provides energy to boost your body's metabolism to burn off fats. Vitamin C in Swiss chard prevents free radical damage to cells and offers protection against cancer, specifically colon cancer. And Vitamin C also promotes a healthy immune system, warding off colds and aiding in curing infections.

Potassium in Swiss chard helps lower blood and cholesterol levels. The iron in the vegetable helps produce energy in the body and produces the protein hemoglobin, which carries oxygen throughout the body.

The trace mineral manganese in Swiss chard helps to produce energy from proteins and carbohydrates and synthesizes fatty acids. Manganese also protects against the damage of free radicals produced during energy production.

How To Prepare Swiss Chard

Shop for Swiss chard in the refrigerated section of the produce area. Look for bright and vivid green leaves that don't have any discolorations or yellowing. Make sure the stalks are crisp and that the leaves are not wilted or have any spots.

Store unwashed Swiss chard in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for several days. You can also blanch Swiss chard leaves and freeze them for later use.

When you're ready to use, wash the Swiss chard carefully to remove any dirt and debris. Swirl the leaves and stalks in a bowl of cold water and then rinse in cold running water. Trim away the bottom end. If there are too many fibers, peel them away just as you would celery.

Make sure to cook in a non-aluminum pan, since the iron in Swiss chard will discolor your pots. Quick boiling is better than steaming, since this method releases the oxalic acids in the vegetable and makes it taste more sweet and not as bitter.

Use Swiss chard in place of spinach for vegetable lasagna.

Swiss chard makes a great alternative to cabbage for stuffed vegetables.

Consider wrapping your favorite sandwich (tuna, turkey, chicken) fixings in Swiss chard.

Or use cooked Swiss chard with your penne pasta, olive oil, lemon juice and garlic.

Add steamed Swiss chard to frittatas and omelettes.

How Much To Eat

Eat one cup of Swiss chard per average serving.

Tomatoes

Tomatoes are the most grown vegetable in the United States. They are actually fruits in the botanical sense, but they're not as sweet as most fruits, so they're considered a vegetable.

There are four basic types of tomatoes, listed here according to size. The smallest variety is the cherry tomato. These sweet and tasty tomatoes grow in clusters.

Next are the medium tomatoes, including Early Girl and Better Boy. These are tasty and sweet and the earliest to mature.

Plum tomatoes include Roma tomatoes, with thick walls and fewer seeds, making them excellent for sauces that call for tomatoes.

Beefsteaks are the largest tomatoes, and are an excellent choice for sliced tomatoes.

Tomatoes are available year-round in supermarkets, grocery stores and farmer's markets.

Tomatoes' Fat Fighting Benefits

Tomatoes are rich in Vitamin C and citricmalic-oxalic acids. The acid helps to accelerate your body's metabolism as well as stimulates the kidneys to filter out large quantities of fat deposits, and flush away fat from your system.

They also contain large amounts of Vitamins A and K, potassium, phosphorus, magnesium and zinc. Vitamins A and C produce necessary detoxifying agents to cleanse your body.

The chromium content in tomatoes helps to stabilize your body's blood sugar levels, and diminish sugar cravings.

Vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant that helps protect against the damage of free radicals roaming the body. It also helps the body to produce collagen, which is important for healthy skin, scar tissue, tendons, ligaments and blood vessels.

But their main ingredients are beta carotene and lycopene. The lycopene in tomatoes gives them their rich red color. Lycopene is a potent antioxidant that neutralizes free radicals and prevents damage to cells. Lycopene may even offer twice as much antioxidant protection as beta carotene, according to recent studies. These studies show that lycopene in tomatoes offers protection against rectal, colon, stomach, breast, lung and endometrial cancer.

New research shows that two compounds present in tomatoes, coumaric acid and chologenic acid, help to block the effects of nitrosamines, especially in persons that smoke. By blocking the effects of nitrosamines, lung cancer is effectively prevented.

Niacin in tomatoes lowers cholesterol. Potassium lowers high blood pressure.

Vitamin K helps maintain healthy bones and activates osteocalcin, which helps to anchor calcium inside the bones.

How To Prepare Tomatoes

There are so many varieties of tomatoes, but when you shop for them, look for the ones that are the deepest shade of red (if you're buying any red tomatoes). The red pigment indicates the presence of lycopene.

Eating raw tomatoes is great, but cooking them releases more of the lycopene. And, cooking them in olive oil enables your body to absorb lycopene better.

Tomatoes are used extensively in Mediterranean cuisine, especially Italian.

Slice or chop tomatoes, or add cherry tomatoes to green, leafy salads.

You can grill, cook, bake, steam or broil tomatoes in any number of recipes.

Serve sliced tomatoes along with slices of cucumber and onion. Add some chopped chives or parsley and drizzle with a little olive oil or sprinkle some lemon on top.

Eat sliced tomatoes with low-fat or fat-free cottage cheese.

Add Roma tomatoes to stews, soups and casseroles. And Roma tomatoes are also great, along with Beefstake and other varieties, with sandwiches and wraps.

Try spinach stuffed tomatoes, tomatoes in gazpacho, broiling tomatoes on top of fish along with slices of onion. Another favorite is stuffed tomatoes with shrimp.

There's also okra with tomatoes and corn. Bake tomatoes, or make them with artichoke hearts or eggplant.

Fresh and homemade tomato soup is also nutritious and delicious.

For the fruit that's eaten like a vegetable, there are hundreds of tomato recipes that are sure to please and satisfy your fat-burning eating arrangement. You can add them to almost any meal – or snack – and be certain you're doing your body good!

How Much To Eat

The amount you should eat will depend on how you intend to eat the tomatoes, for example, chopped or cherry tomatoes in a salad, or a slice on sandwich or wrap, or as an ingredient in a recipe.

One plum tomato (62 grams), one medium whole tomato (123 grams), one cup cherry tomatoes (149 grams) or one cup chopped or slice tomatoes (180 grams), are serving sizes you can consider.

Water Chestnuts

Water chestnuts are a knobby and edible tuber from a water plant from Southeast Asia. They are not a nut, but a vegetable. The brownish-black and papery skin on the outside resembles that of a real chestnut. Inside, the flesh is juicy, crunchy and white. It has a bland flavor with just a touch of sweetness.

They are available year-round.

Water Chestnuts' Fat Fighting Benefits

Water chestnuts are virtually fat-free and cholesterol-free, low in sodium, and a very good source of potassium and fiber, as well as a good source of calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, Vitamin C and folate. They also contain zinc, copper, manganese, selenium, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, Pantothenic acid, Vitamin B-6, Vitamin E and Vitamin K.

Water chestnuts are believed to detoxify the body and to cure jaundice. They also aid in digestive processes.

Vitamin C in water chestnuts is a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory. It helps to fight off the effects of dangerous free radicals to cells and cell membranes. Vitamin C also boosts your metabolism to burn fats.

Potassium in water chestnuts helps to regulate body fluids, and to lower cholesterol and blood pressure levels.

How To Prepare Water Chestnuts

Choose water chestnuts that are fresh and firm without any signs of shriveling. You can store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for about one week. Make sure to peel the water chestnuts before using them raw or cooking. You can obtain water chestnuts that are canned, but fresh ones are much better.

Water chestnuts are used in many Asian dishes. They are especially popular in stir fry recipes due to their crunchy texture.

Although they have a somewhat starchy taste, it is fairly neutral. Many people consider them bland tasting, but their appeal is the crunch. Add them to salads or any meal where you want a vegetable accompaniment that's crisp and crunchy.

Combine with bamboo shoots and snow peas. Add seasoning to taste and stir fry.

Toss chopped water chestnuts into soups, salads, rice and stuffing for poultry. Try them in egg rolls and stuffed green peppers.

You can also eat water chestnuts by themselves for a quick snack.

How Much To Eat

Average serving size is about four water chestnuts per person.

Watercress

Watercress is one of the oldest known vegetables consumed by humans. The hardy perennial has a taste that's quite distinctive with its peppery flavor.

Its green, crisp sprigs are very tender and popular worldwide in many types of cuisines. Watercress is available year-round.

Watercress' Fat Fighting Benefits

Watercress is known to contain compounds that help prevent DNA damage in white blood cells. When white blood cells have DNA damage, this is often the precursor to cancer. A mustard oil in watercress, phenylethyl isothio-cyanate (PEITC), which gives watercress its slightly bitter taste, may be responsible for stimulating the body's protective enzymes to fight off cancer.

High in beta carotene and Vitamins A, B-1, B-6, C, E and K, watercress also contains very good amounts of calcium, iodine, iron, quercetin, magnesium and zinc. Magnesium helps to release energy from food and to absorb nutrients. It also helps to regulate muscle function and mood and aids in heart protection.

Besides the excellent antioxidant properties of Vitamin C, the flavonoid quercetin is also high in anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. These help reduce inflammation, act as a natural antihistamine and help in combating allergies.

Since watercress is 95% water, it acts as a natural diuretic, helping to flush the kidneys and detoxify your system.

Watercress is also very low in calories, so you can eat it as often as you wish and still maintain your fat-burning benefits.

How To Prepare Watercress

The fresh leaves of watercress are often added to salads along with other greens, such as arugula and baby lettuces. The watercress sprigs offer crunchy, crisp taste that's peppery in nature, a perfect complement to other greens.

Add watercress to minestrone and vegetable soups for visual and taste appeal.

Watercress added to sandwiches or wraps add an interesting and tasty element as well as nutrition.

Eat watercress in dips, in omelettes, as a side-dish and main entrée.

Add watercress to pastas and sauces, and to guacamole, salsa, hummus, even mashed sweet potatoes!

Watercress does lose much of its beneficial action when it is cooked, so it is best eaten raw. It also doesn't keep much longer than a few days in the refrigerator. Best to use it within a couple days of purchase.

Wash the leaves well before serving.

How Much To Eat

A typical serving size is about 1/2 cup of watercress.

Zucchini (Or Summer Squash)

Zucchini is a popular summertime squash, also known as summer squash. Zucchini ranges in color from light to dark green with some mottling on the exterior skin. Inside, the flesh is a white color and the flavor is both light and delicate. The vegetable is long like a cylinder, with lengths generally about 4-8 inches. There are some very long varieties as well as extremely small ones, but usually the zucchini you find in the markets is 4-8 inches long.

Did you know that the word zucchini comes from the Italian zucchini, which means small squash. The English and French call zucchini courgette. Zucchini season is April through August.

Zucchini's Fat Fighting Benefits

Zucchini is fat-free, cholesterol-free, low-sodium and literally packed with Vitamin A, along with good amounts of Vitamins B, C and K. The vegetable contains excellent folate and fiber and incredible amounts of beta carotene and lutein.

Many of the nutrients in zucchini, including manganese and Vitamin C, along with magnesium, phosphorus and copper, support cardiovascular health. Recent studies on zucchini's health benefits show increased protection from heart attack and stroke. Magnesium, in particular, helps prevent atherosclerosis and diabetic heart disease. Potassium and magnesium work together to help reduce high blood pressure. Beta carotene and Vitamin C help to prevent the oxidation of cholesterol.

Zucchini's high fiber content has been proven to lower high cholesterol levels. In addition, fiber absorbs cancer-causing toxins and helps to eliminate them from your body. Folate helps the body break down dangerous levels of a metabolic product called homocysteine. High levels of homocysteine in the body can lead to heart attack and stroke.

Phytonutrients in squash help prevent cell mutations into cancer.

Zucchini also has anti-inflammatory properties in its Vitamin C and beta carotene. This is helpful where asthma, osteoporosis and rheumatoid arthritis have flared up due to inflammation. Copper in zucchini is particularly helpful in reducing inflammation of rheumatoid arthritis.

Lutein and zeaxanthin, found in great amounts in zucchini, assists in vision health, helping to prevent macular degeneration and cataracts.

Finally, the flavonoid and vitamin-rich vegetables like zucchini help support the body's capillary structure .

How To Prepare Zucchini

You can stir-fry zucchini with olive oil, garlic, salt substitute and pepper. They're also great grilled. Cut into slices lengthwise, coat with a bit of olive oil and pop on the grill.

Broil zucchini on a baking sheet. Cover the zucchini with a bit of olive oil and some seasonings and broil until golden brown.

How Much To Eat

If you're using a recipe, you'll need several zucchinis, but if you're eating for one, a medium zucchini is a good serving portion.

Chapter 4

Fat Fighting Foods

PROTEINS

Beans

(Black, Cannellini, Chickpeas, White, Great Northern, Lima, Navy, Pinto, Red, Pink and Dark Kidney, Navy and Red Beans)

Beans, or legumes, are among the oldest cultivated plants. Fossil records show that prehistoric man grew and ate legumes. Today, legumes contain more than 33,000 species and are second only to grains in supplying protein to populations of the world. But, compared to grains, beans supply about the same amount of calories, and 2-3 times as much protein. In fact, beans are actually a superfood.

Common beans include black, kidney, lima, mung, navy and pinto. There are also Great northern, Cannellini, chickpeas or garbanzos, and various varieties of kidney beans, including pink, red, white, light and dark, and red beans. Newer varieties are cropping up all the time as consumers flock on the bean bandwagon.

What's causing this rush to beans? Two reasons, really. Beans are satisfying and tasty and they offer numerous health benefits.

Dried beans are available year-round in grocery stores, supermarkets, health food stores and specialty markets as well as farmer's markets and roadside stands.

Beans' Fat Fighting Benefits

Beans contain low-fat protein, folate, fiber, potassium, B Vitamins, magnesium, iron and phytonutrients. They've often been called the poor man's meat since they're an excellent protein source. In fact, beans are one of the most healthy as well as economical protein sources available. Lysine is the principal amino acid

missing from much of plant protein, but beans have abundant lysine. This makes beans a great complement to other vegetarian protein choices, such as beans and rice. Lysine is one of two amino acids essential for Carnitine synthesis. Carnitine is necessary for efficient energy production.

The old adage is that beans are good for your heart. They are that, and so much more. Beans provide a major source of soluble fiber. When soluble fiber passes through the human digestive tract, it snags bile that contains cholesterol and flushes it from the body before it can be absorbed. If you eat a cup of beans a day, according to one researcher, you can lower your total cholesterol by up to 10% in six months. Lowering total cholesterol can reduce your risk of heart attack. The high fiber in beans also helps curb appetite and makes you feel satisfied and full.

Beans also help lower blood pressure, which further benefits your heart.

In addition to its cholesterol and blood pressures lowering ability, beans also prevent blood sugar levels from spiking too rapidly after a meal. This makes beans an excellent choice for diabetics, those with insulin resistance or hypoglycemia. The fiber in beans also provides steady, slow-burning energy.

Beans are a good source of water soluble vitamins, especially thiamine, riboflavin, niacin and folacin. Folate plays a key role in reducing homocysteine levels. Without the right amount of folate in our diets, homocysteine levels rise, which can lead to damage to blood vessel walls and heart attack. Along with folate, beans also pack a healthy punch of potassium, calcium, and magnesium, a mineral and electrolyte combination that may reduce risk of hypertension and heart disease.

Beans are important in every fat-burning conscious person. They fill you up with bulk without lots of calories.

There's also much promising evidence that beans may help prevent cancer, especially cancer of the pancreas, colon, breast and prostate. This is due to the phytoestrogen content in beans called lignins that have been shown to have estrogen-like properties. Diets rich in lignins may reduce risk of cancers related to estrogen levels, like breast cancer. They may also have a protective effect on male repro-

ductive system cancers. Phylates in beans, other compounds, may help keep intestinal cancer at bay.

The antioxidant properties of beans help the heart by protecting against free radical damage, protect against inflammation and promote wound healing.

Chickpeas, or garbanzo beans, are a rich source of antioxidants from the phytochemicals, known as saponins that they contain. Chickpeas can help to lower cholesterol levels as well as being a good source of protein and folate.

With all the bean choices available, you can't go wrong with a daily addition of beans to your fat burning diet.

How To Prepare Beans

Diets that incorporate the use of beans help to lower cholesterol. Their high fiber content, coupled with low caloric levels, make them optimum choices for your fat burning food arrangement.

When shopping for dried beans, find a food source (market) that has a good turnover. You want fresh dried beans, not ones that have been sitting on the shelf for a year. Look for beans that aren't too old. This can be difficult, so rely on your grocer as to their freshness. You'll know how important this is if you've cooked beans for hours and hours and they're still tough. Know why? It's because they're old beans.

If you're shopping for beans in a Whole Foods or other market that displays dried beans in bins, make sure the bins are covered and clean. Check bagged beans for powder. This means they're old. Make sure your beans are whole and not broken.

Before you're going to cook the beans, spread them out and pick through them, discarding bugs, stones, tiny dirt clumps. Yes, there may be some, but you'll get rid of all that. Then rinse the beans in a strainer under cold running water. Soak the beans after that for at least an hour, preferably overnight. All dried beans must be soaked overnight prior to cooking them. The rule of thumb is the longer you soak beans, the shorter the cooking time and the less gas they'll produce.

Newer, fresher beans will quick quicker. Pressure cooked beans are good for some recipes.

How you use beans in recipes is entirely up to you. You will find that almost any meal can benefit with the addition of beans. Here are some quick ideas. I'm sure you'll find hundreds of others.

Beans can be used in soups, stews, salads or casseroles. They can also be pureed.

Make hummus with pureed garbanzo beans and chopped garlic and olive oil.

Middle Eastern-inspired pasta dish is easy when adding garbanzo beans to whole grain penne mixed with olive oil, light cheese and fresh oregano. Simmer cooked garbanzo beans in tomato paste, curry spices and chopped almonds and serve with brown rice. Add garbanzo beans to salads, soups and stews. Sprinkle garbanzo beans with spices and herbs and eat for a snack.

Kidney beans are a traditional addition to chili, as well as Mexican soups and tacos. Hint: use beans instead of meat in these dishes. Serve cooked kidney beans over cornbread and top with grated low-or fat-free cheese for your own unique twist on a tamale pie. Combine kidney, white and black beans with tomatoes and scallions, dress it with olive oil, lemon juice and black pepper for a delicious three-bean salad.

There's also a great Tuscan dish made with white beans (cannellini, large white kidney beans or Great Northern beans), rosemary and garlic.

Try common beans with pasta. Mash beans with chopped garlic and use as a sandwich wrap spread. Make bean salads with different kinds of beans and toss together with fresh herbs and oil.

Try black beans, chopped tomatoes, diced onions, cilantro and guacamole for a wonderful layered dip. Black beans also make a Cuban inspired meal when paired with rice. Blend cooked black beans with onions, tomatoes and spices in black bean soup. For a different burrito twist, use black beans instead of refried pinto beans. Include black beans along with other toppings on baked potato.

How Much To Eat

Aim for 1/2 to one cup of beans at least four times a week..

Beef

Beef is meat from cattle that are about 2 years old. There are at least 100 breeds of beef, but 10 make up the most common, including Angus, Hereford, Charolais and Brahman. Baby beef and calf are from young cattle that are grass and milk fed and weighs 700 pounds. The meat is lighter red and contains less fat than from older cattle. Veal is from a milk-fed calf that weighs about 150 pounds.

Meat inspection by the USDA is mandatory, while grading is voluntary. USDA-graded beef sold at retail are prime, choice and select. Other lower grades of beef such as commercial, cutter, standard and utility are used mainly in ground or processed meat products. Prime has the most fat marbling and flavor, but it is higher in fat content. Most supermarket beef is graded USDA choice or select, but no matter what the grading, the vitamin and mineral content of beef is similar.

Beef is the number one source of protein available. In addition, there are at least 12 cuts of beef that are leaner in total fat and saturated fat than skinless chicken thigh. They also meet USDA labeling guidelines for lean or extra lean. These beef cuts include top and eye round, mock tender steak, as well as boneless shoulder cut roast, round top, boneless shoulder steak, top sirloin, bottom round, top loin, tenderloin, T-bone steak and tri-tip roast.

Beef is available year-round in the meat department of supermarkets, grocery stores, meat markets and specialty markets.

Beef's Fat Fighting Benefits

According to the American Dietetic Association, beef is the number one source of protein, zinc and Vitamin B12. It also provides all nine essential amino acids. A single serving size of 3 ounces of lean beef is an excellent source of protein, Vitamin B12, selenium, phosphorus and zinc. It's also a good source of thiamine, iron, niacin, Vitamin B6, and riboflavin.

Protein helps build strong muscles and promotes overall health. Protein in beef serves as an energy source, keeps the body energized and supports key bodily

functions, and works with the body's immune system to prevent disease. Proteins are part of all the body's tissues (all muscles, organs and bones) and make up hormones and enzymes that regulate all the body's processes.

The B complex vitamins (niacin, riboflavin, Vitamin B6 and B12) help increase energy production and metabolize fats, carbohydrates and protein. Vitamin B6 and B12 may help prevent heart disease and stroke, while Vitamin B12, which is only found in animal food products, assists in the production of red blood cells in the body.

Riboflavin also contributes to healthy vision, eyes and skin. Thiamine's key beef function is to promote normal appetite as well as to promote a healthy nervous system.

Iron increases oxygen from lungs to all body cells and also to muscles to prevent fatigue.

Zinc assists the body in healing wounds and prevents infections. Zinc also improves taste perception and helps curb appetite.

Beef plays an important role in cancer production through its conjugated linoleic acid (or CLA) content. CLA is a fatty acid that the scientific community is all abuzz about. CLA inhibits tumor growth and development and also decreases body fat and increases lean muscle mass. Research shows that CLA may help normalize blood glucose levels and thus help prevent diabetes. In addition, CLA may promote heart health by lowering serum cholesterol and triglyceride levels in the body. And, finally, CLA stimulates the body's immune system and promotes bone health.

Selenium is a powerful antioxidant in beef that, along with Vitamin E, helps prevent free radical damage to cells. Selenium may reduce the risk of certain types of cancers, heart disease and improve your chances of fighting off infection.

Choline in beef plays an essential role in the brains' functioning, especially in long and short-term memory.

Omega 3 is an essential fatty acid contained in beef that's essential for human growth and development. Grass-fed beef is an excellent source for essential omega 3. Besides scientific research that shows omega 3's benefits in individuals with heart disease, omega 3 may also possess anti-cancerous properties, say new studies. The omega 3 source in beef comes from the green leaves of the grass that the cattle eat.

Grass-fed beef also has a lower fatty acid ratio as well as less total fat than grain-fed stock. Grass-fed beef is also lower in calories.

Pound for pound, you can't go wrong with lean beef in your fat-burning food hierarchy!

How To Prepare Beef

When shopping for beef for your fat burning food list, look for the leanest cuts. These include loin or round in the name. Always buy grass fed, certified organic beef. For ground beef, buy 90% lean or higher.

You need to refrigerate beef immediately (or freeze it for later use). Refrigerated beef needs to be used within 3-5 days. If freezing, you can either repackage it or freeze in the original packaging. Kept in the freezer, beef will stay fresh for about 9-12 months. Be sure to defrost safely in the refrigerator or in cold water.

When you're ready to use, first you should trim away all visible outside fat before cooking. You don't need to rinse beef before cooking, since cooking will destroy any bacteria. Marinate beef in the refrigerator for up to five days. Boil used marinade before you brush on top of meat to be cooked and discard any leftover marinade.

Never partially cook beef to then refrigerate and finish cooking later. Partial cooking will not kill bacteria present.

Braising beef is a good cooking choice for less tender beef cuts like the following steaks: chuck, chuck arm, round, blade, eye of round steak, brisket and tri-tip steak. It's also good for these types of beef roasts: arm, blade, shoulder, and

rump, short and back ribs. Braising is a slow, moist-heat cooking method using a small amount of liquid and a tightly-covered pan.

Other methods include grilling, roasting, stewing, broiling and pan-broiling. Low-fat cooking methods include roasting, grilling or broiling. Avoid frying!

Beef's recipe list is almost endless. It includes everything from grilled T-bone steaks, marinated Mediterranean steaks, steaks with caramelized onions, grilled or pan-broiled hamburgers, meatballs, beef pasta and casseroles, beef stew, beef stock for soups, beef kabobs, enchilada skillet steak, beef ranchero wraps, grilled beef tacos and much, much more!

Enjoy a good cut of lean, fresh, certified organic, grass-fed beef today!

How Much To Eat

Three ounces, or one deck of cards size (the size of a deck of cards) is sufficient and recommended per single serving.

Buffalo (American Bison)

Buffalo, also known as American Bison, once numbered in the millions and were the primary food source for the Plains Indians. Indiscriminate slaughter all but made the buffalo extinct by 1900. Today, through careful breeding practices on mostly private ranches, buffalo number about 300,000.

Buffalo meat has a rich taste, much like beef, but with higher protein and less calories. There are no e coli problems with buffalo meat.

Buffalo's Fat Fighting Benefits

Buffalo meat is low in fat and cholesterol and high in protein, vitamins and minerals. Buffalo is 30% higher in protein than beef and has less calories. Its cholesterol rating is 50% less than beef. Depending on the cut, buffalo meat has 70-90% less fat than beef.

Iron in buffalo meat is also higher than in beef. This is great for lactating or pregnant women. Iron contains hemoglobin, which transports oxygen from lungs to all body cells.

Studies conducted by many universities confirm that buffalo meat is very high in essential fatty acids. Buffalo meat has an excellent omega 3 to omega 6 acid ratio and contains much more conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) than previously known. CLA is an omega 6 polyunsaturated fatty acid. This is the so-called good fat, which enhances the body's healthy metabolism.

Since the human body cannot naturally produce CLA, it can only be obtained through either supplements or diet. Food sources of CLA are primarily animal meats like buffalo and elk. Clinical studies have shown that CLA may reduce human body fat at the same time as it preserves muscle.

Buffalo meat also benefits the heart by reducing LDL cholesterol levels.

How To Prepare Buffalo

Buffalo meat is cooked much the same way as beef. Its taste is similar to beef as well, although it's fuller and sweeter. There is no gamey taste, however. Fresh cut buffalo meat is darker red and richer in color than many red meats.

Because it contains less fat, buffalo meat cooks faster. Be careful not to overcook buffalo meat. You can substitute buffalo meat for any of your favorite recipes that call for beef. But you do need to remember a few things.

When broiling buffalo steaks, place the rack one notch below what you'd use for beef. Buffalo steaks will cook about 1/3 faster than beef and are best served medium rare. Do not cook buffalo meat beyond medium or it will be dry and tough.

Roasting buffalo calls for lower temperature (about 270) vs 325 for beef. Roasting time is comparable to a beef roast. Use a meat thermometer to gauge the internal temperature. You should cook only until rare or medium rare.

Ground buffalo meat is lean (90-95%) and also cooks faster than beef patties. Overcooking will dry out the meat. There's also virtually no shrinkage, so the

patty size you put on the grill or pan is what you'll wind up with. Remember, the thicker the patty, the juicier the resulting burger.

Another preparation note is that you don't need to add any fat to the pan to cook buffalo patties. The meat won't stick, there's no grease to drain and the burgers are delicious!

How Much To Eat

Eat one 3 ounce serving per person.

Chicken And Turkey

Chicken and turkey are both versatile foods popular in the U.S., as in many parts of the world. Chicken and turkey are poultry, and a great alternative to beef as a means of obtaining vital protein as part of your fat-burning eating arrangement.

In fact, chicken and turkey are widely regarded as the world's primary source of animal protein and, in its skinless versions, as a very healthy and low-fat alternative to red meat. Chicken and turkey are available year-round in the meat section of supermarkets, grocery stores and meat and poultry markets.

Chicken And Turkey's Fat Fighting Benefits

Chicken and turkey are low-calorie, low-fat (skinless) alternatives to red meat, and a very good source of protein, providing nearly 68% and 65% respectively of the daily recommended value in a 4-ounce serving. Since human (and animal) structure is built on protein, we need the amino acids from plant and animal protein in order for our bodies to make the required patterns of amino acids. While chicken and turkey are a very good protein source, the leanest part is the breast, while chicken or turkey with the skin on doubles the amount of fat and saturated fat in the food. The best way to eat chicken and turkey and obtain all the vital nutrients minus the extra fat is to skin the chicken before cooking.

Protein may be important in reducing the amount of bone loss in older people, according to studies of individuals, particularly those with poor protein intake.

Chicken and turkey's nutritional composition also provides a very good source of cancer-protective niacin, a B vitamin. Components of human DNA require niacin and a niacin deficiency has been linked to genetic DNA damage.

The trace mineral selenium is also found in good amounts in chicken and turkey. Selenium is an essential compound of metabolic processes, including antioxidant defense, thyroid hormone metabolism and immunological function. The cancer-protective mechanisms of selenium have also been shown to induce repair of damaged DNA, to slow the proliferation of cancer cells and to help kill off abnormal cells. Selenium is also part of the protein glutathione peroxidase, which may offer the best cancer protection. Glutathione peroxidase helps the liver to detoxify potentially harmful molecules.

Consumption of chicken also provides protection against Alzheimer's and other age-related cognitive diseases.

Energy gets a boost from eating chicken and turkey, due to their being a good source of another B vitamin, Vitamin B6 which, along with niacin, is essential for the body's conversion of proteins, fats and carbohydrates into energy. Niacin helps regulate blood sugar and optimizes insulin activity, while Vitamin B6 is vital in the processing of carbohydrate (from sugar and starch), especially glycogen breakdown. Glycogen is the form in which sugar is stored in the liver and muscle cells.

Besides energy metabolism, Vitamin B6 is important in a number of other basic cellular processes.

How To Prepare Chicken And Turkey

When shopping for chicken and turkey, especially whole chicken and turkey, look for birds that are solid, plump and have a rounded breast. For whole chicken and turkey or parts, look for pieces that give a bit when pressed, and make sure they don't have a bad smell. Only buy chicken or turkey that's within the stamped sell-by date to make sure of freshness.

Regarding skin color, white or yellow is irrelevant. Its nutritional value is the same. Just be sure the skin is opaque and not spotted. Spotted skin indicates old birds.

When buying chicken or turkey that is frozen, avoid those that have obvious freezer burn – they've been in the freezer far too long. And if you see deposits of frozen liquid in the package, steer clear of those as well, since it's a good indication the chicken or turkey has been defrosted and refrozen.

Your best bet is to buy certified organic or free-range chicken. Both of these methods ensure chickens that will not only taste better, they'll be higher in nutritional value and healthier for you. Organic chickens are fed an organic diet and are not subjected to hormones or antibiotics. Free-range chickens graze outdoors freely and are not confined to henhouses. When buying turkey, opt for organically grown turkeys.

Store chicken and turkey in your refrigerator's coldest section. You can keep it in the store packaging if it's not damaged. Otherwise, repackage it securely before you refrigerate. Chicken and turkey will keep in the refrigerator for 2-3 days. If you're going to freeze chicken or turkey (taking advantage of market sales), be sure to wash, pat dry and freeze in either aluminum foil or freezer paper. Frozen chicken and turkey will keep for up to one year.

There are countless cookbooks listing literally thousands of recipes for chicken and turkey. To attempt to cover the many variations here would be pointless. Suffice to say, chicken and turkey are so versatile, and so delicious and nutritious, that you can't go wrong in almost any recipe. There is one caveat. Make sure to remove the skin to avoid excess fat and saturated fat.

Consider some of these chicken and turkey suggestions. Try an Asian flair with sautéed chopped skinless breast with fresh vegetables. You can add tamari, ginger, garlic and any other seasonings you choose.

There's roast chicken, grilled chicken, stewed chicken, chicken salad, chicken added to soups and stews, chicken tacos, burritos and enchiladas, chicken breast

and white bean chili, salads with grilled chicken breast. Substitute turkey for chicken in any of these recipes.

Also try chicken or turkey stir-fry, marinated chicken or turkey, stuffed chicken or turkey breasts and more.

Be sure to cook chicken and turkey until the meat is white, not pink, and the juices run clear.

How Much To Eat

An average serving is 1/2 breast or 4 ounces or one cup chopped or diced chicken or turkey.

Cottage Cheese

Cottage cheese is a cultured product made from pasteurized skim milk and cream that's added to the finished product. Cottage cheese is one of the four main types of cheese including unripened (cottage, ricotta, etc.), soft ripened (mold ripened blue) or salt cured (feta), firm (cheddar, Swiss) or hard (Parmesan or pecorino).

Available year-round in supermarkets' dairy cases, cottage cheese comes in regular, lower fat (from 2% to fat-free). According to USFDA guidelines for food labeling, cheese can be labeled low fat, reduced fat, and light, less fat, nonfat and fat-free. To qualify as low-fat, for example, a cheese must contain no more than 3 grams fat per serving.

Cottage Cheese's Fat Fighting Benefits

Cottage cheese is a nutritious food that's an easy addition to your fat-burning food schedule. Cottage cheese is an excellent source of protein, calcium and a whole host of vitamins and minerals.

While cottage cheese has less calcium than hard cheese, its fat content ranges from 1-5 grams per cup.

Cottage cheese is an excellent source of selenium and riboflavin and a good source of fiber.

Among dairy foods, cheese is actually the largest contributor to protein available in the U.S. food supply. Cheese protein is of very high quality and contains all the necessary and essential amino acids for the human body's requirements. Casein is the main cheese protein, but water soluble mild proteins like lactalbumin and lactoglobulin may also be present depending on the whey content trapped in the cheese. Cheese protein is readily digestible since some proteins are broken down to peptides and amino acids during ripening.

Cottage cheese fat content is low. A 4 ounce serving of nonfat dry curd cottage cheese has 0.5g fat, 0.3g saturated fat and 8g cholesterol.

Cottage cheese is also a rich source of conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) as well as sphingolipids. These may help reduce the risk of chronic diseases like heart disease and some cancers.

Because of the addition of creaming mixtures, regular cottage cheese contains more calcium (about 60mg per 100g) than does dry curd cottage cheese. Figure that cheeses higher in calcium also contain other minerals such as phosphorus and magnesium in proportionately greater amounts.

Bottom line, eat a variety of low-fat or non-fat cheeses on a regular basis and save the higher fat ones for special occasions.

How To Prepare Cottage Cheese

A scoop of cottage cheese with sliced fruit or tomatoes makes a nutritious snack or light meal. Cottage cheese is a great protein source in place of meat. Sprinkle cottage cheese with cracked black pepper for added pizzazz.

Try blueberries, blackberries, strawberries or raspberries (or all four) on top of a scoop of cottage cheese. Mmmm, good!

Even add pineapple chunks, sliced peaches, pears or nectarines to your cottage cheese for a mouthwatering, healthy fruit and cheese plate loaded with protein.

Top ½ cup of cottage cheese with 1 Tbsp. sugar-free or reduced sugar preserves.

Whip up a cottage cheese/chocolate mousse dessert in the blender. Use 1 tsp. cocoa and 2 packets of artificial sweetener). Add 1 Tbsp sugar-free instant chocolate pudding mix and cottage cheese. Top with diced almonds and then chill until set.

Make a pudding with 1 tsp. vanilla and one packet of artificial sweetener with cottage cheese.

Cottage cheese is versatile. Use it at the table, for snacks, in salads. Cottage cheese goes with vegetables and condiments, too, like peppers, olives and pimientos.

Try cottage cheese in lasagna using durum wheat pasta, in cheesecakes and low-fat pastries.

Since it is so perishable, cottage cheese must be refrigerated. Use within one week.

How Much To Eat

Use ½ to 1 cup, depending on recipe. When eating alone, use 1 cup per person.

Eggs

Eggs are one of the most readily available, delicious and excellent sources of protein. Composed of a yellow yolk surrounded by translucent white fluid and encased in a protective shell, eggs come from a variety of sources. The most common is from chickens, but there are also other poultry eggs.

Several varieties of chicken eggs are available including white, brown, organic, low-cholesterol eggs, and omega 3 eggs. Eggs have a wonderful taste that's unlike anything else.

Eggs are available year-round in the supermarket and grocery store dairy aisle and at specialty and farmer's markets.

Eggs' Fat Fighting Benefits

Eggs contain exceptional nutritional value. One egg contains 5.5 grams of protein and only 68 calories. Eggs are an excellent source of protein, which is required for

the human body to obtain the necessary supply of amino acids. The body then rearranges nitrogen and creates its own requirement of amino acids.

Eggs also contain choline, a nutrient our bodies can't produce enough of naturally. The fat-containing structures in cell membranes require an adequate supply of choline. Choline is especially important for brain function and overall health. It is also a critical component in cell's ability to send messages back and forth. Choline's benefits don't stop there. Choline, one of the B vitamins, helps convert homocysteine into a benign substance before it can damage blood vessels. This helps protect the heart.

Eggs do contain cholesterol, but it's important to debunk a myth about eggs raising blood cholesterol right now. This is the result of extensive and ongoing scientific research. There are two types of cholesterol, dietary and blood. Dietary cholesterol is found in eggs, along with meat, poultry, dairy and seafood. The second type of cholesterol is blood cholesterol, also called serum cholesterol. Blood cholesterol gets produced in the liver and moves through the bloodstream. Two sub-categories of blood cholesterol are High Density Lipoprotein (HDL) and Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL). LDL is considered bad cholesterol.

Here's where it gets interesting. Research proves dietary cholesterol (like that in eggs) does not increase blood cholesterol levels. What does increase LDL is saturated fat. Three types of saturated fats are: saturated, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated. Saturated fat is the one that increases LDL levels and raises blood cholesterol. Eggs, however, contain mostly polyunsaturated fats. These actually lower blood cholesterol.

Eating eggs also improves your eye health and reduces risk of cataracts and macular degeneration. This is due to eggs' composition of lutein and zeaxanthin. In fact, egg contains more lutein than green, leafy vegetables including the lutein vegetable king: spinach!

Vitamin D is a naturally occurring component in eggs – one of the only foods where this is true.

Eggs are very good source of tryptophan, iodine, zinc, selenium and a good source of phosphorus and molybdenum. Selenium is a powerful antioxidant that protects against the damage of free radicals and guards against heart disease and some cancers, including breast cancer.

Zinc is involved in enzyme activity and taste perception as well as being essential for growth and sexual maturation.

Research conducted by Harvard School of Public Health found that regular egg consumption may help prevent heart attack, stroke and blood clots. Prevention of blood clots is due to the anti-clotting proteins in egg yolks.

Vitamin A in eggs helps maintain skin, hair and nail growth, mucous membranes and vision in dim light.

Riboflavin in eggs is essential in energy production and metabolism of proteins and fat.

How To Prepare Eggs

Eggs are readily available in supermarkets, grocery stores and farmer's markets. They are classified according to USDA grading system with labels of AA, A or B. AA indicates superior quality and freshness. Eggs are further labeled by size: extra large, jumbo, large, medium and small.

When buying eggs, look for uniform quality with no breaks or cracks. Eggs should be stored in the refrigerator in the carton they came in. Don't store on the refrigerator door, as this allows heat from the door's opening and closing to affect their freshness.

When preparing eggs, be careful to wash eggs before you crack them. This alone will not safeguard against salmonella, a bacteria from chicken intestines that can make you quite ill. You have to cook eggs at high enough temperatures for long enough to destroy the bacteria. Raw, soft-boiled or runny eggs may pose salmonella risk. Hard-boiled, scrambled, poached or baked eggs do not.

Immediately wash in warm soapy water any dishes, boards or utensils (and your hands). Sanitize surfaces with 1 teaspoon chlorine to 1 quart water.

Eggs are great breakfast food items. Prepare them scrambled, poached, baked in frittatas or quiches. Add them to salads. Use eggs to make a variety of recipes. Hard-boiled eggs make great snacks. There's also deviled eggs, eggs in potato salad, eggs as an accompaniment to many dishes.

Add sliced hard-boiled eggs to spinach salad with olive oil. Mix chopped up hard-boiled eggs with leeks, dill and fresh lemon juice for a healthy and nutritious egg salad.

Instead of the traditional and fat-laden Eggs Benedict, try this healthful version. Poach two eggs and place atop a wholegrain English muffin (or spelt bread) with steamed spinach as a bed. Add a slice of raw Bermuda or Vidalia onion and Beef-stake tomato and enjoy!

No huevos rancheros for your fat-burning arrangement. Instead, try adding chili peppers to your scrambled eggs. Serve this with healthy black beans and a slice of spelt bread for a delicious, nutritious and fat-burning meal.

How Much To Eat

Eat two whole eggs daily. Make sure to buy certified organic eggs!

Fish

(Herring and Sardines, Mackerel, Salmon, Trout, Tuna)

Fish, especially fatty or cold-water fish, such as salmon, mackerel, trout, tuna, herring and sardines (which are young herring), are a delicious and nutritious addition to your fat burning diet.

Widely available fresh and frozen in supermarkets, grocery stores and specialty or fish markets, fish are plentiful, inexpensive (especially in season) and easy to prepare.

Herring, which is also called sardines or young herring, comes from the waters of the North Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. There are more than 100 species of this fish, but most are of a silver color and range from ¼ - 1 pound. Shad, the largest member of the herring family, ranges in weight from 3-5 pounds. Fresh herring has a dark flesh with a rich and strong flavor. It has a high fat content and soft texture. Cured herring acquires a firmer texture and the flavor depends on whether it was cured by smoking, pickling, salting or other method. Fresh herring is found in stores in the spring in the specialty markets on the East and West Coasts.

Sardines come in about 20 varieties that are sold as sardines worldwide. Although available fresh, they are typically sold canned in small, ready-to-use tins. They are available in soy, olive or other oil, smoked, fried, packed in tomato sauce, salsa, or mustard sauce. They may also be skinned, boned and sold as fillets.

Mackerel, also called Pacific mackerel, king mackerel, kingfish, Atlantic mackerel, Spanish mackerel, or tinker mackerel, is found off the Atlantic coasts of Europe and North America, although there is a Pacific variety as well. While there are many mackerel species, most have dark, firm flesh, fatty and rich with sweet and strong flavor. Mackerel is available fresh, whole, in steaks, fillets, smoked and salted.

Salmon is a cold water fish that travels thousands of miles during their life cycle and return to their birth location to spawn and die. There are many salmon species, with the flesh ranging in color from pink to red to orange. Wild Alaskan or sockeye salmon are better for your fat burning eating arrangement than farm-raised salmon. This is due to the fact that contaminants are often able to get into the feed of farm-raised salmon. Even though farm-raised salmon are fattier than wild salmon, you have to cook them in ways to get rid of the contaminants that reduce the fat content, and the overall percentage of beneficial omega-3 fats is lower in farmed salmon. Salmon (wild or farmed) has low levels of mercury. It is not being over-fished. Salmon is available fresh, frozen and canned (most canned

salmon is wild) and available year-round in grocery stores and supermarkets, specialty and fish stores.

Tuna is available in five varieties, yellowfin, bluefin, bigeye, albacore and skipjack. Yellowfin, also called ahi tuna, comes from the Hawaiian Islands and is prized by cooks for its taste. Bluefin comes from the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, and the Mediterranean and Black Seas, has the highest fat content of all the tunas, which is where the flavor comes from, and it the most expensive tuna, making bluefin sought-after for sashimi. Bigeye comes from all the three major oceans, is similar to bluefin, although not as fatty or expensive, and also makes a great choice for sashimi or for ordering in a restaurant. Albacore comes from all the temperate and tropical waters and is a white-fleshed tuna that's best served raw or as sashimi and is most often used in canned tuna. Skipjack is found in subtropical and tropical waters and is available year-round, best served as sashimi.

Trout is the common name that's given to a number of freshwater fish species that belong to the salmon family. They are usually found in cool, clear lakes and streams throughout North America, Northern Asia and Europe, although some varieties have been introduced in New Zealand and Australia. Most trout are freshwater fish, but the steelhead trout spends its adult life in the ocean but returns to the stream where it was hatched to spawn and die. Types of trout include, rainbow, golden, brown, brook, cutthroat, bull trout and Arctic Char. Trout such as the brown, brook, cutthroat, bull trout and Arctic Char have versions that run to the ocean. Trout are a somewhat bony fish with good eating flesh that's fatty in content. This is the good fat you want to eat. Most trout commercially available is the rainbow trout variety, while brook and Eastern brook trout are found in limited numbers. In the U.S., about 95% of rainbow trout consumed is raised on trout farms and is available nationwide year-round. It is lower in fat than other fish, but high in nutrients.

Fish's Fat Fighting Benefits

Oily fish like herring and sardines, mackerel, salmon, trout and tuna provide high-quality protein with less calories than the same size portion of meat. These fish are low in sodium, low in cholesterol and saturated fats and good sources of

potassium, essential vitamins and minerals. While these fish are higher in fat than other fish, they are loaded with omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-3 fatty acids don't harden when they are cooled, like saturated fat does.

Eating fatty fish is good for your heart. Why? The main reason is the fish oil fatty acids help reduce blood clotting by the process of decreasing blood platelet stickiness and reducing high blood triglyceride levels, which are a coronary disease risk factor. Omega-3 fatty acids in oily fish also increase beneficial relaxation in larger blood vessels and arteries. Omega-3 oils in fatty fish may also help stabilize heart rhythms. Both of these help lessen your risk of sudden cardiac death. Omega-3 fatty acids also help lower blood pressure and offer protection against stroke.

Eating fish that are rich in omega-3 fatty acids also may help prevent certain types of cancer, according to recent research, as well as inhibit the spread of cancerous cells that can lead to prostate cancer. There are other conditions it helps prevent or improve as well, including breast cancer, ulcerative colitis, arthritis, depression, lupus erythematosus and psoriasis.

These fish all contain complete protein. It's called complete because it supplies the body's essential amino acids. These are structural compounds of protein that the body cannot make on its own. Depending on the type of fish, its habitat, how it's prepared, etc., it may contain various amounts of calcium, phosphorus, potassium and other beneficial nutrients.

Protein in oily fish helps build lean muscle mass and also provides the body with energy. This is very important for fat burning diets. Tuna, for example, is naturally low in fat but high in protein.

These naturally low-cholesterol (and in tuna, low-fat) fish help the human body to get rid of bad fats you've gotten from eating other foods.

Some farm-raised fish like salmon may contain contaminants (PCBs, etc.), so it's best to buy wild salmon instead. This is because contaminants may get into the farm-raised fish through the feed they're given. Wild salmon, on the other hand, are carnivorous, so they're not exposed to those contaminants. And mercury levels are not a problem in wild salmon. Trout does not generally contain contami-

nants, especially lake and stream trout, since they eat insects and other aquatic life.

Salmon and mackerel are excellent sources of selenium, niacin, Vitamin B6 and B12. One 3-ounce cooked mackerel fillet contains about 230 calories, 21 grams of protein, no carbohydrate, 15.7 grams fat and no fiber. One 3-ounce serving of sockeye salmon contains 180 calories, 23 grams of protein, 9 grams of fat, 50 grams of sodium, 60 grams cholesterol and 410 grams potassium.

Selenium in oily fish is an antioxidant as well as a compound of several essential enzymes. Selenium may help delay or prevent cancer, have anti-aging effects and is an important mineral for proper functioning of the thyroid. It also promotes a healthy immune system.

Niacin is necessary for the chemical processing of fats in the body. Various studies have shown that niacin lowers total blood cholesterol in persons who have elevated cholesterol.

New studies have identified a lipid or fat product our bodies make from one omega-3 fatty acid, eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA), called resolvins, that helps oily fish provide anti-inflammatory benefits to human body joints and improve blood flow. Another benefit of the anti-inflammatory properties of oily fish is the protection it offers the skin, particularly against sunburn and potentially, skin cancer.

Omega-3 fatty acids also offer great protection against macular degeneration, dry eye syndrome and other eye conditions.

Finally, omega-3 fatty acids in cold-water fish, especially salmon, help guard against Alzheimer's disease. This is because the brain is more than 60% structural fat and requires omega-3 fats like EPA to function properly. Eating 2-3 meals per week of fatty, cold-water fish like salmon can help improve the way the brain works in individuals susceptible to or suffering from Alzheimer's or other cognitive diseases, according to new and very promising research reported in the Journal of Neuroscience.

Eating oily fish also helps facilitate weight loss and helps with overall nutrition. Two proteins in fatty fish, particularly salmon, of calcitonin and chondroitin sulphate, may help the body to access energy from food but prevent absorption of food in the gut, according to recent studies with animals. Chondroitin sulphate reduces dietary fat absorbed by the gut and prevents fat that's actually absorbed from being stored in the body. So, salmon, for example, helps persons with their fat burning eating arrangement by making them feel fuller and eat less, preventing absorption of fat from food and preventing the body from using dietary fat to make body fat.

How To Prepare Fish

When shopping for fresh fish, follow these guidelines. Look for clear and bulging eyes, firm flesh that's the right color for the species (i.e., red for salmon, light pink for rainbow trout), shiny skin, now brown or yellow edges, moist gills and fresh odor that has no ammonia.

If you buy fresh fish and will cook it that night, store it in the refrigerator until ready to use. Then remove from package, rinse with cold water, pat dry with paper towel and cook. Be sure to wash your hands and all preparation material immediately in hot, soapy water. If you will be storing fish and not cooking it within two days, wrap it tightly and freeze immediately. Frozen fish will generally keep for 7-9 months.

Skin and fillet salmon, mackerel, tuna and other oily fish if you buy it whole (or have your fish counter person do it for you).

To reduce risk of PCBs, dioxin and other contaminants, always fillet fish and discard the fat, skin and internal organs where the contaminants are most likely to accumulate. Most fat you'd remove is along the belly, in the middle of the fish's back, the line along the sides and under the skin. If your fish is already filleted from the store, you have less to worry about.

Remember that cooking will not destroy contaminants, but heat melts some of the fish's fat, which allows a portion of contaminated fat to drain away. Best

preparation is to broil, grill or bake skinned, trimmed fish on a rack that permits fat to drip off. Make sure to discard this fat.

You can bake, grill, broil, poach or steam oily, cold-water fish. Avoid frying fish as this contains too much fat, and not the good fat.

There are thousands of recipe ideas for oily, cold-water fish. Here are just a few to get you started.

For salmon: add salmon that's leftover to greens and/or vegetables for a nutritious and tasty salad. Combine salmon with scrambled eggs and onions. Broil salmon and top with various sauces. Sear or broil salmon and serve over a bed of steamed spinach. Or, serve with durum wheat pasta and top with dill, lemon, olive oil, scallions and black pepper sauce.

For trout: Try a fresh spring trout salad, trout stew, trout sandwich or lettuce wrap ingredient, trout almandine, grilled trout with sesame seeds, oven baked trout, barbecued trout in foil with tomatoes, onions and peppers.

For mackerel: Try in Cioppino, barbecued, broiled or sautéed.

For sardines or herring: eat right from the tin, on whole-grain crackers. Bake with parsley, lemon, clove garlic and olive oil. You can also sauté, grill or broil.

For tuna: Try tuna salad, tuna bisque, broiled tuna steaks with garlic and lemon, tuna with honey-mustard sauce, tuna with tomatillo salsa.

How Much To Eat

Typical fish serving size is 3-4 ounces per person, 2-3 times per week. For sardines or herring, figure 1-2 sardine or herring fillets per person.

Shellfish

(Clams, Lobster, Crab, Shrimp)

Fish that have a shell or hard covering are known as shellfish. These include clams, oysters, mussels, scallops, lobster, crab and shrimp. They are widely avail-

able fresh or frozen year-round in supermarkets, grocery stores, specialty markets and fish markets.

Shrimp are small, tasty crustaceans that are the most popular seafood in the U.S., with the exception of canned tuna. There are more than 300 species of shrimp harvested worldwide and thousands of varieties within each of those species. In the U.S., deep water or pink shrimp is most commonly available. Pink shrimp is reddish-pink in color and about 3-4 inches long. Large tiger prawns are becoming more popular here, about 6-12 inches long. They are a staple in Asia. Once cooked, the flesh of shrimp becomes opaque or light pink in color.

Shrimp swim, unlike their relatives the lobsters and crabs who are crawlers.

Lobster, also called northern lobster, spiny lobster, thorny lobster or rock lobster, actually comes in two kinds: clawed – with two large front claws, and spiny – with a rougher shell than the clawed variety and with longer antennae. All lobsters have 10 legs, jointed body and hard shell casing. Live and frozen lobster is available in the U.S. year-round, and will vary according to season as to where it comes from.

Crab, like lobster, has a hard shell, claws and legs, but a different shape. There are thousands of crab species worldwide, but most common ones found in the U.S. include blue crab, small Atlantic crustaceans, Dungeness crab, from the Northwest coast, King crab from the North Pacific and Bering Sea (these can grow to 6 feet!), snow crab, from the Atlantic and Pacific, Rock and Jonah crab from the East coast, stone crab Texas and Florida and red crab, small but meaty crustaceans that are found along the continental shelf. Crab can be purchased live, cooked in the shell, as picked crabmeat, fresh or frozen or canned. It is available as lump meat from the body, smaller pieces of body meat called backfin, and flake (parts from the entire crab).

Clams are soft-bodied animals called bivalve mollusks that live in shells. There are many varieties of hard-shell, soft-shell, surf and razor from the Atlantic and just as many from the Pacific and Pacific Northwest. Cockles, from New Zealand,

aren't really clams but are smaller and have a sweet, intense flavor. Clams are available year-round.

Shellfish's Fat Fighting Benefits

Shellfish species like shrimp, clams, lobster, mussels, oysters, lobster, crab and scallops contribute to a healthy and balanced diet. They are a great alternative to meat as a protein source. They are low in calories as well as saturated fats, and also provide excellent sources of essential protein and omega-3 fatty acids. In addition, similar to fatty fish, shellfish provide essential minerals and vitamins such as zinc, copper, iron and Vitamin B12. Specific species offer more vitamin and mineral content than others. For example, shrimp is low in calories and saturated fat. One 4-ounce serving provides about 23.7 grams of protein in 112 calories and with less than one gram of fat. Shrimp is an excellent source of selenium and a very good source of Vitamins B12 and D.

Shellfish such as shrimp are an excellent source of tryptophan and a good source of phosphorus, zinc, copper and magnesium.

Although shrimp has high cholesterol content (12 large boiled shrimp have about 200 milligrams of cholesterol), recent research on shrimp and blood cholesterol levels conclude that shrimp should not be avoided because of this cholesterol level. In fact, shrimp, while it raises LDL or bad cholesterol levels by 7% (according to one study), it also raised HDL or good cholesterol levels by 12%. The same study reported that the triglycerides level in study participants decreased 13% (triglycerides is a form in which fat is carried in the blood).

Shrimp contains abundant amounts of Vitamin B12, one of the nutrients that helps keep homocysteine levels lower. High homocysteine levels can damage blood vessels and result in heart attack and stroke. Shrimp are also a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, which help protect the heart through their anti-inflammatory effects and prevention of blood clot formation. The omega-3 fatty acids also help protect against abnormal heart rhythms which could prove fatal. Omega-3 fatty acids in shellfish also help lower blood pressure.

Clams are not a source of omega-3 fatty acids, but are an excellent source of protein, Vitamin B12 and iron, are low in calories, fat and carbohydrates. One 3-ounce serving has 63 calories, 10.9 grams protein, 2.2 grams carbohydrate, 0.8 grams of total fat, but no fiber.

Lobster, in a 3-ounce serving has low-fat, low carbohydrate and an excellent source of potassium, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus and selenium. While it does have some cholesterol at 61 grams, it is a good source of protein, zinc, Vitamin B12, Vitamin A, and copper. Lobster also has excellent amounts of amino acids of threonine, isoleucine, alanine, valine, lysine, leucine, arginine, aspartic acid and glutamic acid. Aspartic acid helps provide energy from glucose and assists with digestive enzymes. Arginine provides heart help, maintains cellular energy and guards against obesity. Isoleucine combats low blood sugar and promotes muscle recovery following exercise. Leucine also helps with low blood sugar and to rebuild muscles.

Crab is low-fat, low calorie, and a good source of protein, magnesium, folate and Vitamin B6. It is an excellent source of selenium, phosphorus, calcium and potassium. It's also a good source of omega-3 fatty acids and amino acids like aspartic acid, glutamic acid, arginine, valine, lysine, leucine, isoleucine and Threonine.

Clams are low calorie, low fat, a good source of protein, an excellent source of Vitamin B12 and iron as well as potassium and phosphorus. They are a very good source of calcium and selenium and the amino acids of leucine, lysine, aspartic and glutamic acid, alanine and arginine. They are a good source of magnesium, manganese, copper and zinc but not a source of omega-3 fatty acids.

Omega-3 fatty acids in shellfish may also protect individuals against Alzheimer's disease and other cognitive disabilities. In addition, omega-3 fatty acids help improve and/or reduce depression.

Selenium in shellfish may offer protection against certain forms of cancer such as leukemia, multiple myeloma and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Tryptophan in shellfish is an excellent amino acid that helps you curb cravings for food. It offers a feeling of satiety or fullness and also enhances your ability to eat less in subsequent meals.

Zinc in shellfish is a powerful anti-inflammatory and helps prevent gastrointestinal illness by promoting digestion and elimination of toxins from the body. It promotes wound healing, guards against osteoporosis, offers protection to the immune system.

Copper in shellfish helps reduce high cholesterol, helps promote wound healing, helps prevent heart attack, osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, and osteoporosis. It is an important blood antioxidant and also keeps nerves and bones healthy and boosts the immune system. It helps keep cell membranes healthy and is a key player in storing and releasing iron to form hemoglobin necessary for red blood cells.

Magnesium in shellfish is essential for healthy heart functioning. It helps stabilize heart rhythm and prevents blood clotting. Magnesium helps maintain proper blood pressure and protects against heart attack and stroke. It also helps with muscle function and maintaining healthy bones and tissue.

How To Prepare Shellfish

First, a note of caution regarding shellfish needs to be mentioned. There are allergic reactions that can occur in some individuals who have food allergies. In fact, shellfish allergies can be one of the more severe, after peanut allergies. Common symptoms include disturbances of the gastrointestinal tract, hives, fatigue, headache or migraine, hyperactivity, depression, asthma or breathing problems, skin rash, infections and others. If you or anyone that you will be serving shellfish to have food allergies always let them know in advance that a dish contains shellfish so that they can make the determination whether or not to eat it.

Shellfish can be purchased year-round either fresh or frozen. Obviously, frozen shellfish has a much longer shelf life. They'll last several weeks, versus fresh shellfish's shelf life of 1-2 days.

When buying fresh shellfish, always check to ensure you're buying from a store or market with a good reputation for fresh supply of product. Smell the shellfish. This is a good indicator of how fresh it is. Good quality shellfish should have a slightly saltwater smell, but you won't be able to smell it through plastic-wrapped product. Your best bet is to purchase from the display shellfish and then smell it after the counterperson has wrapped it and handed it to you. If it doesn't smell right, don't buy it.

If you're buying live lobster, make sure you buy them the day you're going to cook them. Lobster is also sold pre-cooked and frozen. Its best to cook lobster broiled or boiled.

Fresh shellfish, like shrimp, should have bodies that appear firm and attached to their shells. Don't buy any that have black spots, which indicates their flesh is breaking down. Don't buy any that have yellow or gritty shells, either, as this means that a chemical has been used to bleach the shells.

If you're storing shellfish in the refrigerator, be sure it's in the coldest part, placed in a bowl with ice.

Many recipes are available for shellfish. Well, literally thousands, depending on the type of shellfish. Here are just a few to get you started.

For shrimp: Cook either shelled or unshelled, depending on your preference and how you'll be serving them. Serve cooked shrimp cold with salsa. Cut up cooked shrimp and add to vegetable soups, stews. Add to spicy pasta sauce and serve over durum wheat pasta. Add chopped cooked shrimp with other ingredients such as chopped onions or scallions, diced chili peppers, lemon juice, garlic, olive oil and serve over fresh lettuce.

For lobster: Add lobster meat to a fresh garden salad or eat alone as an entrée. Be careful not to eat lobster too often, though, because of its sodium and cholesterol content.

For crab: You can boil, broil or bake crab legs. You can also pan-fry, although that is not arecommended method for your fat burning eating regime.

For clams: You can steam or grill them for a fat burning and delicious meal. Pan or deep frying is not recommended.

How Much To Eat

Eat about 10 ounces of shrimp per week. This can be in 3-3.5-ounce portions. For clams, a single serving size is 3 ounces or 84.9 grams. For lobster and crab, eat 3-4 ounces once per month (due to its sodium and cholesterol count).

Lamb

Lamb comes from sheep that are less than one year old. Many times lamb comes from sheep as young as 5-7 months. Lamb's taste is mild. There's also imported New Zealand lamb, fed on grass rather than grain. Mutton comes from sheep between 1-2 years old and has a more robust taste than lamb.

Lamb and mutton are available in many different cuts, from legs, roasts, chops, stew meat, ground, ribs, shanks and breasts. The tender cuts come from the rib and loin while tougher cuts are from shoulder and leg.

There is lamb that's designated as spring lamb, meaning it comes to market during the spring and summer months. But lamb is available year-round and spring lamb does not necessarily mean the lamb contains any better quality.

Lamb is a staple in cuisines throughout the world. These include countries such as Greece, Australia, Turkey, New Zealand and the Middle East.

Lamb's Fat Fighting Benefits

Lamb is high in saturated fat, but it is a very good source of protein. Just 4 ounces provides 60% of the daily recommended protein value. Since the human body is built on protein, the source of protein from lamb is highly beneficial to our bodily amino acid-making requirements.

Besides its high protein content, lamb is rich in tryptophan, selenium, Vitamin B12 and niacin, along with zinc and phosphorus.

Tryptophan is an essential amino acid that's formed from proteins during digestion. Tryptophan can only be obtained from food. It helps start the production of serotonin in the brain which soothes nerves and anxiety and curbs cravings for carbohydrates.

Lamb is an excellent source of zinc. This mineral affects many fundamental bodily processes, but the most important is probably its effect on the immune function. It acts in a number of enzymatic reactions critical not only to immune function but also to healing of wounds and normal cell division. Of importance to your fat-burning eating arrangement, zinc helps stabilize blood sugar levels and the body's metabolism.

The B vitamins in lamb help support the production of red blood cells. This prevents anemia, helps cells metabolize oxygen and allows normal cell development. Vitamin B12 in lamb provides energy as well as protection from cardiovascular disease.

The B vitamin niacin offers protection against Alzheimer's disease and other age-related cognitive problems.

How To Prepare Lamb

Lamb is inspected by the USDA, which is mandatory, and usually carries a grade, although this is voluntary. Grades are prime, choice and select. Prime and choice are the most flavorful and tender, but have higher fat content.

When shopping for lamb, always look for meat that is firm, fine textured with pink color. Choose the leanest cuts for your fat-burning diet. Any surrounding fat or marbling throughout should be white in color, not yellow.

Lamb is highly perishable and must be kept in the refrigerator's coldest section. It will stay fresh for 3-5 days (roasts and chops) or two days for ground lamb. You can also freeze lamb in freezer paper or aluminum foil, wrapped tightly. Roasts and chops will keep for 6-9 months, ground lamb for 3-4 months.

Ground lamb is delicious in burgers. Try braised lamb loin with red wine, rosemary and garlic. Lamb stew is a nutritious and delicious menu choice.

Lamb kabobs (along with root vegetables and colorful peppers) are a tasty treat anytime.

When serving grilled lamb, it's always a good idea to pair it with cruciferous vegetables. These include Brussels sprouts, cabbage (red or green). Other cruciferous vegetables that go well with lamb are broccoli, collard greens, cauliflower and kale. The reason for this is that grilled meat can produce heterocyclic amines, which are carcinogenic compounds. Cruciferous vegetables significantly increase enzymes involved in detoxification of the liver, drastically reducing the effects of cancer-promoting compounds from grilled meat.

How Much To Eat

A standard serving for lamb is 3-4 ounces per person.

Lentils

Lentils are legumes, as are other beans. Lentils grow in pods with 1-2 round, oval or heart-shaped seeds. These are usually quite small, smaller than the tip of a pencil eraser.

Lentils are sold either split into halves or whole and come in many varieties: red, brown, orange, green, yellow and black. In the U.S., green and brown are the most commonly found in supermarkets. Brown and green lentils are best for retaining their shape after cooking. Others can become soft and mushy.

The flavor of lentils differs among varieties, but is generally hearty, dense and nutty in taste.

Lentils' Fat Fighting Benefits

Lentils are an excellent source of dietary protein, an alternative to meat. They are virtually fat-free and are low in calories. Members of the legume family, lentils are a great source of fiber that lowers cholesterol. In addition, lentils' high fiber content helps manage blood sugar levels in the body. This prevents a spike in blood sugar after a meal.

Dietary fiber in lentils binds to bile and removes toxins from the body. Fiber bulks up stools and prevents constipation, along with preventing diverticulitis and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). The soluble fiber in lentils helps to provide slow burning and steady energy while it also balances blood sugar levels.

Lentils also contain iron which helps the body increase energy. Iron is an integral hemoglobin component. Hemoglobin transports oxygen from lungs to body cells and is part of the body's enzyme systems that produce energy and metabolize protein and fat. The protein and iron in lentils may help the body to maintain bone strength and for women to manage the symptoms of menopause as well as lactating, pregnant women and growing children – all of whom need increased iron.

High fiber in lentils, along with its folate and magnesium content, helps prevent heart disease. Folate helps to lower homocysteine and convert it to benign substances before they can cause cell damage, particularly in heart disease.

Magnesium is a calcium channel blocker that improves blood and oxygen flow and nutrients in the body.

Lentils are an excellent source of molybdenum and a very good source of tryptophan and manganese, a good source of phosphorus, copper, thiamin and potassium. Potassium helps to metabolize protein and carbohydrate. In addition, lentils are a terrific source of isoflavones and lignan phytoestrogens.

How To Prepare Lentils

Unlike beans, lentils do not need to be soaked before cooking. They should be washed and inspected thoroughly to remove any bad ones. Rinse and drain, cover with water and boil 2-3 minutes. Then reduce heat to simmer. Avoid overcooking, or they'll turn mushy. Brown lentils take about one hour to cook. Others take less time, 10 minutes to under one hour. As for amounts, one cup dried lentils makes 3-4 cups of cooked.

Lentils can be used in so many different recipes, but are particularly delicious in soups and stews. Cooked and cooled lentils are great in cold salads.

They're a great substitute for meat and a great and nutritious way to obtain protein!

If you will be adding tomatoes or wine to your lentil recipe, remember this will lengthen the cooking time due to acidity. Add these ingredients after the lentils are almost done or tender.

Season liberally to taste.

Also try lentils as a substitute for beans. The cooking time will need to be adjusted, but there's none of the intestinal side effects that beans typically produce.

Other meal suggestions include lentil tacos, lentils in place of rice, noodles or pasta. You can even sprout lentils and use for salads.

Try lentil loaf or patties instead of meat loaf or meat patties. Enjoy!

How Much To Eat

An average daily serving of lentils is about 120 grams. This level is especially recommended for menopausal women as a means of reducing symptoms. Use 1 Tbsp. on salads.

Pork

Pork is a meat that comes from hogs. In the U.S., most hog farms are located in the Midwest where they're fed a diet of corn. A fully grown boar may weigh more than 500 pounds while a sow is 450 pounds or more. Only about 1/3 of pork produced annually in the U.S. is consumed fresh. The rest is processed, cured or smoked.

Pork is available as bacon, Canadian bacon (low-fat bacon that resembles ham), chops, ham, roasts, sausage or spareribs. There are also specialty hams including Black Forest, Smithfield, prosciutto and Westphalian.

Available year-round in supermarkets, grocery stores and meat stores, pork is a nutritious and delicious way to obtain protein.

Pork's Fat Fighting Benefits

Try pork as a good protein choice in your fat-burning arrangement. Pork today is leaner and trimmer than just a few years ago. There are just 7.5 grams of fat in 100 grams of cooked lean pork. It is chock full of nutrients, including six essential vitamins, four minerals, protein and energy. Pork contains complete protein, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, Vitamin B6, Pantothenic acid, phosphorus, magnesium, iron and zinc. These will keep your fat burning eating in high gear. And pork tastes great!

Did you know that pork is one of the best sources of thiamin? Thiamin is essential for the body to metabolize carbohydrates. Thiamin also plays a key role in nerve and muscle tissue growth and repair and helps you maintain appetite.

Niacin in pork helps release energy from carbohydrates, proteins and fats. Niacin also maintains a healthy digestive tract, nervous system and skin.

Vitamin B6 in pork is essential for protein, carbohydrate and fat metabolism. The central nervous system also benefits from Vitamin B6.

Riboflavin in pork is right up there with milk as a best source. Riboflavin helps release energy from food as well as division of cells. It also promotes tissue growth and repair and helps maintain healthy eyes and skin.

Vitamin B12, which is only found in animal products, is in abundant amounts in pork. Vitamin B12 helps build red blood cells and healthy tissue. It is essential for all cells' normal function and metabolism. In addition, Vitamin B12 is part of the synthesis of genetic material.

Pantothenic acid in pork helps the body metabolize protein, fat and carbohydrate. It is also required for hemoglobin to do its job transporting oxygen and carbon dioxide throughout the body.

Pork is a good source of phosphorus which strengthens teeth and bones and maintains energy balance in the body.

The magnesium content in pork helps regulate energy balance, transports nutrients to the body and helps form strong bones and teeth.

The rich zinc content in port promotes healthy development and maintenance of both the immune system and bone structure. Zinc provides resistance to infection, enhances bone formation and protects against bone loss in later years.

Iron in pork is critical for energy production and is absorbed more readily than iron in vegetables, fruits, eggs and supplements.

How To Prepare Pork

When buying pork, always check the sell by date on the package. This is the last day that the pork should be sold. Prepare pork as soon as possible after purchase or wrap meat in foil or freezer bags and freeze. Uncooked refrigerated pork should only be kept for 2-3 days. Cooked pork will last refrigerated 4-5 days. Roasts and steaks will keep in the freezer for 6-12 months. Stew meat lasts 3-4 months and ground pork about 2-3 months.

When you defrost frozen pork, do so in the refrigerator for safety reasons. Bring to room temperature for about a half hour before cooking.

Pork can be roasted, broiled, sautéed, grilled, stir fried, or stewed. There are countless pork recipes that are appetizing, nutritious and delicious. Try savory apple pork chops, Asian-style pork chops, barbeque ribs, tropical grilled pork chops, pork stir-fry, Chinese pork roast, Dijon marinade pork loin, pork roulades with sauerkraut. The list is endless. Try them all!

How Much To Eat

A standard serving size for pork is 3 ounces per person.

Rabbit

Rabbit is another alternative to beef. It is lightly flavored and has a nutty after-taste that's unlike any other meat. Many people say that rabbit tastes somewhat like chicken.

Rabbits are long-eared, domestic or wild burrowing mammals. Rabbit meat is available at specialty meat stores or hunted fresh.

Rabbit's Fat Fighting Benefits

Rabbit meat is low in fat, low in cholesterol and chock full of protein. There's just 175 calories in 4 ounces of rabbit, with 7.2 grams of fat. This is slightly less than skinless dark turkey meat.

The protein in rabbit is a good alternative to beef or other meat. The human body requires protein for proper functioning and overall health.

Rabbit is a rich source of Vitamins B2, B6 and B12, selenium and iron, and a good source of zinc and copper.

Vitamins B6 and B12 help keep homocysteine levels from becoming too high. Homocysteine in the human body damages blood vessels and can lead to stroke or heart attack. These two B vitamins also help protect against osteoporosis and prevent colon cancer by shielding the liver from toxins.

Riboflavin in rabbit (Vitamin B2) promotes the body's production of oxygen-based energy that's so important to the heart and muscles. It also provides protection for the protein-like antioxidant molecule, glutathione, which needs to be constantly renewed.

Selenium in rabbit is a powerful antioxidant that scavenges free radicals before they can do damage in the human body. Selenium may also delay or prevent certain types of cancer, and positively affect aging. In addition, selenium is important for proper functioning of the thyroid and helps promote a healthy immune system.

Copper in rabbit meat is essential for the growth, development and maintenance of bones, connective tissue, brain, heart muscle and many other body organs. Copper helps in the formation of red blood cells, in iron's absorption and utilization and the synthesis of enzymes and proteins. The enzymes produce cellular energy, and help regulate blood clotting, nerve transmission and transportation of oxygen,

Zinc in rabbit meat is a powerful anti-inflammatory, guards against infection, helps the body to maintain a healthy digestive tract, helps the body to absorb cal-

cium and prevent osteoporosis, strengthens the immune system and improves white blood count.

Iron in rabbit meat is an important part of hemoglobin, which transports oxygen from the lungs to all parts of the body. It's also part of key enzymes for proper metabolism and energy production.

How To Prepare Rabbit

The best way to prepare rabbit is in rabbit stew with onions and vegetables. Roast rabbit also goes well with mustard.

There's roast rabbit au jus, or roasted and braised rabbit in thyme sauce.

There isn't much breast meat in rabbits, but the saddle or tenderloin is comparable. Have the butcher cut the rabbit for you to make it easier. You can use the bony rib cage in a stock recipe. One 2-1/2 pound rabbit will generally serve 2 people. If you're using it in a stew or other recipe like a crock pot or kabobs, it will serve more.

How Much To Eat

Standard portion size for rabbit is 3-4 ounces per person.

Skim Milk (Fat Free Milk)

Skim milk, now known popularly as fat free milk, is milk that contains 0-0.5% butterfat. You can immediately see the difference of fat free milk as compared to whole milk, which contains 3.25% minimum butterfat. The USDA changed milk labeling laws a few years ago to define four types of milk: whole, 2% (reduced fat), 1% (reduced fat) and fat free.

Skim milk, or fat free milk, contains less butterfat. Theoretically, it should cost less than whole milk, and for a while it did. But with fat free milk's increasing popularity, the price has gradually crept up to equal that of whole milk.

Skim Milk's Fat Fighting Benefits

When you drink or use skim or fat free milk, you are getting a lot of nutritional benefits as well as fat burning ones. Skim or fat free milk contains calcium that's important for both building bone mass and strengthening bones. While skim or fat free milk doesn't contain as much calcium as whole milk, you're still getting calcium that you need.

Potassium in skim or fat free milk helps you to maintain healthy blood pressure, to regulate body fluids and a host of other important benefits.

Vitamin D in skim or fat free milk helps your body to maintain proper levels of the phosphorus and calcium. The vitamin thus helps with bone building and strengthening. Often you'll find skim or fat free milk that's fortified with vitamin D. Look for and buy these brands.

Skim or fat free milk contains few calories and no solid fat. This is important to your fat burning eating arrangement. You want to choose milks that are low to no cholesterol and low to no saturated fats. High saturated fat content contributes to LDL or bad cholesterol in the body, which can lead to heart attack and stroke. Keep your cholesterol in check by consuming only skim or fat free milk.

How To Prepare Skim Milk

You can often substitute skim or fat free milk for many recipes that call for milk. Be aware that some baked goods will taste a bit different, not as rich, as those made with whole milk. But, by and large, the difference will be negligible, especially after you've weaned yourself off of whole milk. Once you've made the switch to skim or fat free milk, if you're given whole or even 2% milk by mistake – say, in your Starbucks' latte, for example – you'll think you're drinking pure cream! It will taste so fat. That's because of the high percentage of butterfat (fat) in whole milk and, to a lesser extent, in 2% milk.

I've been drinking skim or fat free milk for more than 10 years and wouldn't drink anything else. I cook and bake with it, make my smoothies and drinks with it, also home-made lattes.

Other ideas for drinking adequate amounts of skim or fat free milk each day include adding it to your favorite cereal (hot or cold) instead of whole milk, using skim or fat free milk to make condensed cream soups such as cream of tomato soup. Try it. You'll soon begin to love it!

When buying skim or fat free milk, be sure you check the sell by date on the carton. That's the date it must be sold. If the date has passed, don't buy it. While it will be good for a while after that, why take the chance that it will go bad quickly? Always buy the freshest product you can. Also, refrigerate skim or fat free milk immediately. If it's a warm day, place the milk in one of those insulated bags or a cooler to transport it home. Keep it in the coldest part of the refrigerator and don't leave it out on the counter where it will spoil quickly. If you've had the milk for a while and it's not used up, smell it before you use it. Good milk won't have a smell, or not much of one, but bad milk has a sour odor.

Finally, always purchase certified organic fat free or skim milk. This is milk that is produced without the use of chemical pesticides or herbicides. Generally speaking, the producers use more natural fertilizers and have higher care standards for the animals. Certified organic skim or fat free milk is widely available in supermarkets and groceries in the dairy section.

How Much To Eat or Drink

Average recommended daily serving is 1,000-1,200 mg per adult. This can take the form of three 8-ounce glasses of fat free milk per day.

Soy Milk

Soy milk, made from soy beans, is a good alternative to drinking milk, especially for those persons who aren't able to drink cow's milk. More and more Americans are drinking soy milk, however, due to its many health benefits.

In making soy milk, the basic process is to first clean and soak beans overnight, then puree them. The solids (known as okara) are strained out and the remaining liquid is boiled for a period of time, usually about 10 minutes.

Soy milk is also available year-round commercially at supermarkets and grocery stores, health food and specialty markets.

Soy Milk's Fat Fighting Benefits

People who are unable to drink cow's milk have been drinking soy milk for quite some time. But soy milk is a veritable nutrition powerhouse that also offers powerful health benefits. It is low-fat, contains no cholesterol, is an excellent source of extra protein and fiber and contains abundant amounts of isoflavones. It's a good source of Vitamins B1, B2, B6 and E.

According to the American Cancer Society guidelines on diet, foods based on soy help reduce cancer risk because they contain anti-carcinogens. By drinking soy milk, you may reduce your risk for breast, prostate and/or colon cancer. The isoflavones in soy milk may reduce prostate cancer risk as well as prevent growth of prostate tumors or stop existing tumors from progressing to a more advanced stage.

Isoflavones are naturally occurring plant chemicals similar to estrogen. The benefit of isoflavones isn't limited to its anticarcinogenic properties. They're also essential in prevention of heart disease, osteoporosis, cataract formation, and other eye diseases.

Soy milk contains calcium, although it doesn't contain as much calcium as cow's milk. Many manufacturers now add calcium to commercial soy milk, although naturally-occurring calcium is better. Stick with pure soy milk and get your calcium from low-fat or fat-free yogurt and cheese.

Soy milk also helps persons suffering from diabetes and kidney disease. Soybeans, which is the key ingredient in soy milk, has been recognized as an important aid to controlling blood sugar since 1917. The fiber in soy milk helps the body slow the absorption of sugars so the body can better handle it. Soy milk may help control diabetes by making the body more sensitive to insulin in its bloodstream at the same time it slows glucose release to a more manageable rate. Soy milk's ability to lower LDL (bad) cholesterol also helps prevent damage to the kidneys.

Soy milk contains numerous beneficial phytochemicals as well as isoflavones. These include inositol hexaphosphate, plant sterols, protease inhibitors and saponins. Phytochemicals are powerful anti-cancer compounds.

Some persons experience an allergic reaction to soy milk. This occurs in about one in every 3,000 adults. The allergy is usually less severe than other types of allergies, such as those with milk, eggs and peanuts. And, persons who find they're allergic to one form of soy can often consume other soy with no ill effects.

Other cautions are for persons with certain thyroid problems or breast cancer patient survivors. Consult your doctor regarding your ability to tolerate soy milk.

How To Prepare Soy Milk

Soy milk can be consumed much the same way as cow's milk: for drinking, using with cereals, to make low-fat or fat-free waffles or pancakes, to flavor coffees and teas.

Soy milk shakes with additional whey protein are not only delicious, they're also extremely nutritious.

You can add soy milk to cream soups. Try soy milk in home-made and low-fat ice creams, custards and pumpkin pies.

Soy milk comes in regular, lite, unflavored, flavored with vanilla, chocolate, almond and carob, with added calcium and other varieties. It is available at supermarkets and grocery stores in the dairy aisle. It's also available in the non-refrigerated quart and 8-ounce containers.

Be sure to check for freshness. Always examine the sell-by date. When you get home and are ready to use the soy milk, make sure it smells sweet. If it's past its prime, it will have a sour smell. Don't use it.

How Much To Eat

One serving size is one 8-ounce glass. For recipes, consult the ingredients list for how much to use.

Tofu

Tofu, also known as soya bean curd, has also been called a perfect food. Tofu is sometimes called the cheese of Asia. It's made by grinding cooked soya beans until milk is produced. The milk is then solidified with the mineral coagulant calcium sulphate. Tofu is naturally bland, which makes it an ideal addition to dishes that are both sweet and savory.

There are three types of tofu, firm tofu – dense, silken tofu – soft, and steamed tofu -- particularly good for vegetarians. In fact, tofu has been a vegetarian staple for years. It's only now making its way into mainstream American diets. And it's high time, indeed!

Tofu is available year-round in the dairy case in supermarkets, grocery stores, health food stores and specialty markets.

Tofu's Fat Fighting Benefits

Tofu is low in calories, high in protein, cholesterol-free and may even reduce the risk of heart disease. Tofu is, in fact, a very good source of protein, specifically soy protein, along with numerous other nutrients essential to good health.

Research on protein in tofu shows that regular tofu consumption may help to lower cholesterol levels by as much as 30%, lower LDL (the bad cholesterol) levels by 35-40%, and raise levels of HDL (the good cholesterol). One serving of tofu contains 15% of the daily requirement for omega-3 fatty acids, a heart-healthy substance normally found in fish. These fatty acids help improve cholesterol as well as assist in proper blood clotting ability.

Isoflavones in tofu act like a form of estrogen in the body. This can be beneficial to women suffering symptoms of menopause and peri-menopause. The estrogen in tofu helps to regulate the drastic estrogen hormonal fluctuations. Isoflavones help maintain hormone levels and fight off estrogen loss. A woman's bodily supply of estrogen affects many potential conditions, like breast cancer, gynecological cancers and osteoporosis.

These same isoflavones in tofu are important to fight off prostate cancer in men. Studies have shown a slowing of prostate cancer growth as well as protection against prostate gland enlargement in men that consumed tofu regularly.

Protein in tofu is crucial for muscle building. Along with strong doses of the antioxidants manganese, copper and selenium, these antioxidants protect the DNA against numerous cancers.

Calcium is also in good supply in tofu. Calcium protects against bone loss and weakness, osteoporosis and rheumatoid arthritis.

With tofu's powerful nutrients in a serving of just 70-100 calories, tofu can be a great addition to a fat burning eating arrangement and a way to maintain healthy weight. Low in saturated fat, tofu has all the benefits of meat while also low in calories and sodium.

And if this isn't enough, tofu is also extremely easy to digest.

How To Prepare Tofu

It's important to ensure that the tofu you buy is fresh and not sour. Smell it for freshness. Also look for the stamped freshness date on the wrapping. At home, rinse the tofu and keep it stored in cold water in the refrigerator. Plan to use within 3-4 days at the most.

One drawback of tofu when you cook it is that it absorbs cooking fat easily. Some people may be allergic to soya, so take this into consideration if you or someone in your family suffers from food allergies.

Try to cook your tofu in non-fat products to enjoy all of tofu's high-protein fat-burning benefits.

Firm tofu is dense and can be cubed and added to stir fry, grilled, pickled, smoked, baked, barbecued, service in soups or scrambled.

Soft tofu is best suited to recipes in which tofu needs to be blended. These include protein shakes, dressings and desserts.

Firm and extra firm tofu is best for sautéing, grilling and baking.

Here are some other recipe suggestions for tofu:

Marinate firm tofu in soy sauce and fresh ginger, then stir fry with garlic, hot peppers and onions. Make a Thai dish by adding firm tofu chunks to curry sauce. You can also add firm tofu to vegetable stews and soups. Or stir fry firm tofu with garlic, vegetables and soy for a delicious Chinese dish.

Puree soft tofu with low-fat melted chocolate chips for a faux pie. Blend soft tofu with apple juice and other fruit for a breakfast smoothie.

Mash regular tofu with low-fat mayonnaise and chopped celery for an egg salad-like and cholesterol-free sandwich spread. Use regular tofu with cooked spinach, low-fat ricotta or Parmesan cheese and stuff whole grain lasagna or pasta shells.

Scramble coarsely mashed tofu with onions, mushrooms, herbs and eggs for a terrific breakfast dish.

Go ahead, enjoy!

How Much To Eat

One serving size is 4 ounces, or about 113 grams.

Venison (Deer, Elk, Moose)

Venison (also known as game) includes deer, elk and moose. Caribou and antelope are also considered venison, although these are not as plentiful. Venison is highly prized and selectively offered, usually in specialty markets, although if there's a hunter in your family, during deer hunting season, you might be in luck for a delicious and nutritious meal that's also terrific for your fat burning eating regime.

Deer can be either wild or farm raised, and the meat's flavor is full and deep with a supple and tender texture. Of course, the actual flavor depends on its diet, whether it foraged in the wild or was raised domestically. Either way, deer meat is delicious.

Venison's Fat Fighting Benefits

Venison is ultra low fat and even lower in saturated fat as well as low in calories. A 3-ounce portion of deer contains about 134 calories, 3 grams of fat and 1 gram of saturated fat. The same portion of elk has 124 calories, 2 grams of fat and 1 gram of saturated fat. And moose has 114 calories, 1 gram of fat and absolutely no saturated fat.

In addition, venison is a very good source of protein, Vitamin B12, a very good source of Vitamin B2 and niacin and a good source of Vitamin B6, copper, phosphorus, iron, selenium and zinc.

Iron in venison is an integral part of hemoglobin, which transports oxygen from the lungs to all body cells and also is part of key enzyme systems for proper metabolism and energy production.

The B Vitamins in venison (specifically B12 and B6), help prevent homocysteine levels from becoming dangerously high. High homocysteine levels can damage blood vessels and lead to stroke or heart attack as well as significantly worsen atherosclerosis and diabetic heart disease. Vitamin B12 can also protect against osteoporosis and help reduce the risk of colon cancer by protecting the colon from carcinogenic toxins.

Riboflavin (or Vitamin B2) in venison promotes the production of oxygen-based energy in the body. This is particularly important in the heart and other bodily muscles. Riboflavin also protects the protein-like antioxidant molecule glutathione, which must be constantly recycled.

Niacin in venison reduces the risk of osteoporosis by as much as half. It also synthesizes starch in the body's liver and muscles that can be eventually used for energy.

How To Prepare Venison

When choosing venison, specifically deer, look for young specimens with darker, finely grained flesh and whiter fat. Fat is where the flavor comes from. Check the

sell-by date (if there is one), and only purchase the freshest venison. You'll find venison is available either fresh or frozen.

Of course, you'll trim off any fat and then grill or broil the deer, elk or moose as you would any meat.

Venison is highly perishable, so refrigerate immediately in the coldest part. If you'll use it in 2-3 days, leave it in the original wrapping to minimize handling. If it will be a while before you're ready to cook it, wrap tightly in freezer paper or aluminum foil and freeze. It will keep for 3-6 months.

Be careful when handling raw venison and thoroughly wash all cutting boards and utensils. Marinate venison in the refrigerator since it is very sensitive to heat when left out and can spoil quickly. Thaw frozen venison in the refrigerator overnight.

Recipe suggestions include venison steaks, venison in place of beef or turkey in lasagna, venison stew, venison kabobs with vegetables and venison jerky.

Elk recipes include barbecued elk, elk burger, crockpot elk, elk stew, elk roast, elk meat loaf and elk chili.

For moose, try moose stew, moose stroganoff, moose meatballs, roast, hoagies and kabobs.

How Much To Eat

Portion size per person for venison is 3-4 ounces.

Whey Protein

Whey, a by-product of cheese-making, is widely recognized as a value-added ingredient in many food products today. These include dairy, meats, bakery, snack foods, beverages and confections.

As consumers learn more about whey's potential health benefits, greater demand for its use will be realized.

Whey protein is available in health food stores, some upscale supermarkets and grocery stores and by catalog and online outlets.

Whey Protein's Fat Fighting Benefits

Whey protein contains high quality protein, lactose, minerals like calcium, phosphorus, magnesium and zinc, and vitamins. It is a naturally complete protein. This means that it contains all the daily required amino acids to help maintain and improve your overall health. In fact, whey protein is the highest natural source of branched chain amino acids which can stimulate muscle protein synthesis. Whey protein has particular importance to individuals seeking fat burning improvement.

It's a known fact that the body requires more energy to digest protein than other foods. This is called the thermic effect. As a result, you burn more calories after consuming a protein meal. Whey protein is pure protein that has little or no fat or carbohydrates. It's also a soluble protein, easy to digest, and efficiently absorbed into the body. It quickly provides necessary nourishment to muscles. And these reasons also make whey protein a great addition to low carbohydrate or low-glycemic index diet.

Whey protein contains the essential amino acid leucine, which helps the body preserve lean muscle tissue while also promoting fat loss. There's more leucine in whey protein than milk, egg or soy protein.

Protein in whey protein also helps stabilize the body's blood glucose levels. It does so by slowing glucose absorption into the bloodstream. The effect is lessened hunger pangs because of your lowered insulin levels and because it's easier for your body to burn fat.

Bioactive compounds in whey protein also help stimulate release of two appetite-suppressing hormones: cholecystokinin (or CCK) and glucagon-like peptide-1 (or GLP-1). By adding whey protein to a mid-day beverage or snack, you'll have adequate energy and reduced food intake at your next meal.

Recent human and clinical studies have proved that whey protein assists in reducing blood pressure in borderline hypertensive persons. Whey protein also reduces high cholesterol levels in the body, which helps protect the heart from cardiovascular problems.

Persons who may have reduced glutathione levels, weakened immune systems and infections may also benefit from the addition of whey protein to their diets. The amino acid cysteine in whey protein gives the immune system a boost by helping to raise glutathione levels. This, in turn, may help reduce infection risk and improve the immune system's effectiveness. Wound healing is also promoted with the addition of protein to the diet. Whey protein provides high quality protein that promotes wound healing. Some animal studies have shown whey protein's ability to inhibit the growth of certain cancer tumors.

The lactoferrin in whey protein provides antimicrobial benefits. New studies are being conducted to further examine the protective compounds in whey protein.

Diabetics, particularly those with type-2 diabetes, also benefit from whey protein since it provides more value than other proteins that are higher in fat and cholesterol, helps control blood glucose levels and helps maintain weight.

Whey protein may offer protection against HIV, reduce stress and increase brain serotonin levels and improve liver functioning, particularly in persons who have certain forms of hepatitis.

Whey protein can minimize the effects of aging, particularly in the area of bone loss. The pure protein in whey protein helps keep bones as well as muscles healthy and strong.

How To Prepare Whey Protein

Whey protein is universally versatile. It can be used in baked goods like muffins, cake mixes, breads and quick breads, cookies and biscuits. Use it in cooking and condiments such as waffles, salad dressings, omelets, lasagna, mashed potatoes, gravies and sauces, soups and stews, pancakes, low-fat dips and low-fat mayonnaise or sour cream. Add it to beverages like fruit juice, sports drinks, dairy, soy

or rice milk, smoothies, coffee or tea. Also add whey protein to hot cereals, sugar-free pudding, nonfat cream cheese, peanut butter, cold cereals, oatmeal or oat bran and yogurt.

Remember that whey protein (or any protein powder) tends to make baked goods tougher in texture. It is important to carefully gauge the amount you use and adjust accordingly. Don't over mix the product with other dry ingredients. Only mix it long enough to make sure the dry ingredients are moistened with the wet ingredients in your recipe.

For a healthy twist, substitute whole-wheat pastry flour for all-purpose or pastry flour. Add about 10% more healthful oil (or apple sauce or apple cider vinegar, if appropriate) to your recipe. This will help tenderize the mixture and minimize toughness or chewiness from the added whey protein.

Baked goods may brown a little faster with whey protein added. Monitor and adjust cooking time as needed.

How Much To Eat

For recipes and single servings (i.e., protein shakes), start off with one scoop of protein and adjust (add more) if you find you want it and the recipe isn't compromised. Basically, you're adding protein to an existing recipe. See the guidelines above for how to prepare whey protein.

Chapter 5

Fat Fighting Foods

CARBOHYDRATES

Barley

Barley is a grain that has a nutty flavor and a chewy consistency. It looks similar to wheat berries, but is a lighter color.

Available in pearled, hulled and flaked form from grocery stores and supermarkets, along with whole foods stores and specialty markets, barley can be purchased in prepackaged as well as bulk containers. Barley is available year-round.

Barley's Fat Fighting Benefits

Barley contains excellent amounts of dietary fiber, selenium and tryptophan, and a good source of niacin, copper, manganese and phosphorus. It is also low calorie, with about 270 calories per one cup serving of cooked barley.

Fiber in barley is very important for your fat burning eating arrangement. Not only does fiber help bulk stools and speed elimination of wastes (including toxins) from your body, fiber makes you feel fuller faster. This helps you eat less, not only in the current meal, but in subsequent meals. Thus, fiber in barley acts as an appetite suppressant – great for fat burning! Dietary fiber in barley provides food for your intestines' friendly bacteria, which, in turn, helps you digest foods and also promotes a healthy colon. The same friendly bacteria also create propionic and acetic acid which liver and muscle cells need for fuel. Fiber in barley also helps lower cholesterol. It does this by binding to bile acids and then removing them from the body in your stools. Bile acids digest fat that are manufactured by your liver from cholesterol. So, getting rid of bile acids containing cholesterol in fats is great for your heart and your body. Fiber in barley also helps prevent

spikes in blood sugar levels, which is important for diabetics. And fiber can help prevent women from getting gallstones, according to a study published by the American Journal of Gastroenterology.

Niacin in barley offers cardiovascular protection by helping to reduce total cholesterol and lipoprotein levels. It may also help prevent dangerous free radicals from doing damage to blood vessel walls, and reduce platelet aggregation and thus avoid deadly blood clots.

Magnesium in barley acts as a co-factor in more than 300 enzymes, which includes enzymes involved in your body's use of both glucose and insulin secretion. Foods like barley that contain magnesium can help lower your risk of type 2 diabetes.

Selenium in barley helps prevent cancer-causing substances from doing damage to the colon. Proteins in barley offer significant protection against cancer, especially in the liver. The antioxidant action of selenium also provides protection against heart disease, and helps reduce the symptoms of asthma and arthritis.

Copper in barley also helps reduce the severity of rheumatoid arthritis symptoms. In addition, copper in barley helps provide strength and flexibility to bones, joints and blood vessels.

Barley's phosphorus content is important for all the body's cells. Besides its benefit to bones, phosphorus in barley is an essential component in many compounds essential for life in the body, including energy production and usage.

Plant lignans in barley help protect against breast and other hormone-dependant cancers, as well as heart disease.

How To Prepare Barley

If purchasing bulk barley, you want to make sure that the bins are covered and that your store has a good turnover, so you know you're buying fresh product. Also check to ensure that there's no moisture in either the bin or the prepackaged product.

Barley should be stored in a cool and dry place, preferably in a tightly covered glass container. In warm weather, you can also store barley in the refrigerator.

To cook barley, first rinse it thoroughly under cool running water in a strainer in order to remove any bits and debris. For cooking purposes, figure one part barley to 3-1/2 parts boiling water or broth. Bring liquid to a boil, then turn down the heat, cover the pot and simmer. It takes about one hour for pearled barley to cook, while hulled barley takes about 1-1/2 hours.

Use barley flour mixed with whole grain wheat for healthy breads and muffins. Hot cereal is great with an addition of cracked or barley flakes.

Try a delicious cold salad made with cooked and cooled hulled barley mixed with chopped vegetables and a healthy dressing.

Of course, barley added to hearty soups and stews is always delicious and nutritious. Some suggestions include barley posale, where you add hot chiles for South of the border pizzazz, or barley chowder, barley winter vegetable soup, and herbed Scotch barley soup.

How Much To Eat

Average serving size is 1/2 cup of barley, although when using barley in recipes, be guided by the ingredient amounts per person.

Millet

Millet is a grain that has been used for thousands of years for food. It comes from a tall annual grass. Millet seeds are hulled before use by humans. Hulled millet seeds look slightly round in shape and are white, yellow, red or gray in color. In the U.S., pearled and hulled millet is the most popular. There is also couscous, which is made from cracked millet.

Did you know that millet is the 6th most important grain in the world? It forms a significant part of the diets in Japan, China, Manchuria and various parts of the former Soviet Union, India, Egypt and Africa.

Millet is available year-round in both hulled and whole-grain form. You can buy millet in prepackaged containers or in bulk. Millet is sold in grocery stores and supermarkets, as well as whole food stores and specialty stores.

Millet's Fat Fighting Benefits

Millet is an excellent source of magnesium, calcium, manganese, tryptophan, phosphorus, fiber, B Vitamins and antioxidants.

Millet is an aid to digestion, which helps in your fat burning eating routine. It also acts as a probiotic that feeds the important friendly flora in your intestines. It helps to hydrate your colon to keep your body regular. Millet also helps calm and sooth through its ability to provide serotonin.

Magnesium in millet can help reduce the severity and occurrence of migraines, as well as help prevent heart attack and stroke. Magnesium in millet also offers protection against type 2 diabetes.

Niacin in millet helps to lower cholesterol, which also offers protection against cardiovascular disease.

Phosphorus in millet boosts your body's metabolism to that it burns fat. It also promotes repair of tissues and creates energy your body needs for overall health. Phosphorus also helps promote strong bones.

Tryptophan in millet helps to reduce appetite through its release of serotonin. It also helps improve mood and aid in sleep.

Fiber in millet has a host of beneficial properties. It can protect against various forms of cancer, including that of breast, colon and others. In addition, fiber in millet may prevent gallstones from forming in women. Fiber in millet makes you feel fuller longer, staves off hunger pangs, and helps you eat less in subsequent meals. It also is linked to protection against atherosclerosis, stroke, obesity, diabetes and premature death.

Antioxidants in millet offer protection against dangerous free radical damage to blood vessel walls. This offers significant protection against heart attack and stroke.

How To Prepare Millet

When you buy bulk millet, be sure the container is covered and there's no sign of moisture. Also be sure your seller has a good turnover in bulk products, so that you are assured of maximum freshness.

Millet should be stored in an airtight container in a cool and dry place. It will keep for several months.

Before cooking, thoroughly rinse millet under cool running water in a strainer. Take out any debris or particles that don't belong. For cooking, figure one part millet to 2-1/2 parts boiling water or broth. Bring to a boil, then turn down heat, cover and simmer. Cooking time will be about 25 minutes. For creamier millet, add more water now and then and stir frequently.

You can also roast millet grains before cooking by placing them in a skillet and tossing them over medium heat until they have a rich golden color. Then you can add these roasted seeds to your boiling cooking liquid.

For ways to serve millet, consider that millet makes an excellent cooked cereal. Millet also serves as a substitute for potatoes or rice.

Use ground millet as an addition to healthy breads and muffins. Or add cooked millet with chopped vegetables and healthy salad dressing for a delicious lunchtime meal.

There's also black bean and millet salad. Delicious!

Use sprouted millet in healthy sandwiches and lettuce wraps.

How Much To Eat

Average serving size is 1/2 cup millet. When cooking, be guided by recipe instructions for amounts depending on persons to be served.

Oats

Oats are a hardy cereal grain. Oats are available as oat groats (used in breakfast cereals), steel-cut oats, old-fashioned oats, quick cooking oats, instant oatmeal, and oat bran and oat flour (used in baking).

Oats are available year-round in supermarkets and grocery stores, health and whole foods stores and specialty markets.

Oats' Fat Fighting Benefits

Oats are an excellent source of manganese, a very good source of selenium, and a good source of tryptophan, phosphorus, thiamin, dietary fiber, magnesium and protein. One cup of cooked oats contains about 245 calories.

Oats, particularly oat bran, boosts metabolism to burn fats and produce energy. This can be especially important when considering strenuous exercise. Consume the oats about 1/2 hour before exercising for maximum benefit.

Oats help to lower your cholesterol levels significantly. This can greatly reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease. They also help promote weight loss when combined with a low-calorie diet.

Beta-glucan in oats helps to enhance the body's immune system, especially in response to bacterial infections. Beta-glucan in oats also helps to stabilize blood sugar levels. This is important for all individuals, but particularly to those with type 2 diabetes.

Magnesium in oats helps to prevent type 2 diabetes.

The antioxidants in oats, particularly selenium, help reduce the symptoms of asthma and prevent heart disease. Selenium also promotes DNA repair and may help reduce the risk of colon cancer.

Fiber in oats offers protection against breast cancer, cardiovascular disease. Fiber helps to regulate blood sugar swings, reduces excess blood fats, combats constipation, speeds up elimination and removal of toxins from the body and helps provide energy to the body.

How To Prepare Oats

Depending on the type of oats you are buying, make sure to buy small amounts. This is due to the fact that oats will go rancid more quickly than other grains. Oats are available in prepackaged containers as well as bulk. If buying in bulk, make sure the oats are in a covered container with no evidence of moisture. Make sure you buy from a seller that has good turnover so you obtain maximum freshness from the oats.

If buying a prepackaged form of oats, check the contents description to ensure there's no salt, sugar or other additives.

Store your oats in a tightly covered container in a cool and dry place. Oats stored this way will keep for about two months.

How should you serve oats? There are any numbers of ways, including the ever-popular oatmeal cereal for breakfast (or lunch). There's also oats added to your favorite healthy oatmeal cookies, oat flour or whole oats added to breads and muffins. There's oatmeal added with ground turkey for a healthy meatloaf.

You can use oat groats to make a healthy stuffing for poultry, like turkey.

How Much To Eat

Average serving size is one cup of oats. When using in recipes, be guided by instructions according to persons being served.

Pasta (From Durum Wheat)

Durum wheat is the hardest of all the types of wheat. Due to durum wheat's high protein and gluten content, it's excellent for pasta.

Durum wheat is an amber-colored grain that's lighter than other kinds of wheat. It has a yellow endosperm, which gives pasta its yellow color. Milled, the endosperm turns into semolina, which is used in premium pastas.

Durum wheat, or whole wheat, pasta is available year-round in supermarkets and grocery stores.

Pasta's Fat Fighting Benefits

Durum wheat, or whole wheat, pasta is enriched with iron and B Vitamins. It is also an excellent source of fiber. According to FDA guidelines, pasta is enriched before processing with thiamin, riboflavin, niacin and iron.

Research shows that reduced rates of heart disease, cancer, diabetes and other diseases are associated with eating whole grain foods such as durum or whole wheat pasta. Whole grain foods may also help control weight, according to researchers.

Niacin in durum wheat pasta helps to open up your blood vessels. This is important in lowering cholesterol as well as helping your body to detoxify. Niacin is also involved in the metabolism of carbohydrates, fat and protein. It also generates energy from food. Niacin stimulates circulation, helps maintain normal blood pressure, and supports higher functioning of the brain. It also supports the central nervous system and aids in the digestion of food.

Iron in durum wheat pasta is necessary for many bodily functions, including the transportation of oxygen from lungs to muscles and other body organs. Iron is the reason we have energy. When we are low in iron, we may feel fatigue, irritability or have a headache. Iron's function in the body is essentially to bind oxygen to blood cells and transport the oxygen to where it is needed. Many women are iron-deficient, a condition known as anemia. Eating foods rich in iron, like durum wheat pasta, help to prevent this deficiency.

Durum wheat also contains thiamin, which helps release energy from food. Thiamin also helps regulate appetite, so you won't be ravenous shortly after you eat. Thiamin also supports the normal functioning of muscles, including those in the heart. It's essential for the normal functioning of the nervous system.

Riboflavin in durum wheat pasta is a coenzyme in the breakdown of carbohydrates, fats and proteins. In other words, riboflavin helps metabolize carbohydrates and fats, critically important in your fat-burning regimen. Riboflavin also helps to regenerate glutathione, which acts as an antioxidant offering protection against free radicals. The B vitamin is also essential for development and growth

of bones, body tissues, and the immune and nervous systems. Riboflavin in durum wheat pasta also helps produce and regulate certain hormones, and aids in utilization of neurotransmitters, which are essential for emotional health.

How To Prepare Pasta

When you buy pasta, look for the words “100% whole durum wheat” or make sure that durum wheat is the first item listed on the ingredients.

Durum wheat, or whole wheat, pasta comes in many different shapes and textures. There’s penne, which you can cook tossed with red peppers, broccoli florets, mushrooms and onions for a delicious meal.

There’s spaghetti, which you can serve with a light tomato sauce or herbed with basil, oregano and other spices, or toss with lightly steamed vegetables.

Try bow-tie pasta cooked and served cold with tuna. Or hot with steamed vegetables and light vinaigrette.

Yolkless pasta ribbons are great for casseroles and hearty soups, or for dishes that have a heavier sauce.

You’ll also want to try spirals, macaroni, wheels, rotini, radiators, angel hair, small and medium shells. The list is amazing, and the sizes and textures will give you plenty of variety for your fat burning diet.

Cooking durum wheat, or whole wheat, pasta is easy. Simply put a heavy pot full of water on to full boil, add a pinch of salt, and toss in the pasta to cook. Be guided by package instructions, but don’t overcook. The secret to great pasta is to cook it until just before done, al dente style. That means it still has a bit of crunch to it. Cooked pasta should never look limp and runny. You want it to stand up and take the sauces and vegetables you’re going to add. Besides, pasta will continue to cook until you run it under cool water in the colander. That’s an excellent way to preserve its texture and avoid too much starch.

Serve hot (or cold) and, voila. Instant satisfaction!

How Much To Eat

Per person serving size is about 2 ounces of dried pasta (1-2 cups cooked pasta, depending on size).

Quinoa

Quinoa looks like a grain. Actually, it is the fruit (seed) from a green, leafy plant. Many people use quinoa as a substitute or alternative to couscous or rice.

Did you know that this light and fluffy but delicious grain was once a staple of the Inca culture? It has a delicate, somewhat nutty flavor. The shell of the grain separates during cooking from the creamy center and leaves a smooth, crunchy texture.

Quinoa is available in cereals, in baked goods, cookies, crackers, breads and other items. You can find it whole-grain, as flour or in flakes.

Quinoa is available year-round in supermarkets, grocery stores, whole foods stores and specialty stores.

Quinoa's Fat Fighting Benefits

Unlike hard-to-digest grains, quinoa is easy to digest. It has more protein (about 50% more) than other grains and also contains abundant amounts of B Vitamins, calcium, iron and phosphorus, potassium and amino acids.

Quinoa is also a good source of copper and tryptophan.

The protein content in quinoa is a complete protein. This means it includes all nine of the essential amino acids, but especially lysine, which is an amino acid tissues need to grow and repair.

The rich magnesium content in quinoa acts as a powerful co-factor for 300+ enzymes in the body. These include enzymes the body uses in glucose and insulin secretion. In fact, research studies have shown that regular quinoa consumption reduces your risk of type 2 diabetes. The rich lignin content of quinoa also helps to lower insulin levels. Insulin sensitivity is improved by lowering the glycemic

index at the same time as it increases magnesium, fiber and Vitamin E in the body. Magnesium can also offer protection from migraines. Why? Because magnesium relaxes blood vessels, it prevents the constriction that accompanies migraines and headaches.

The B Vitamins in quinoa help improve metabolism of energy in the brain and muscles.

Copper in quinoa works with magnesium in the grain to protect the body's mitochondria from oxidative damage during the production of energy. Copper also guards red blood cells from injury that roaming free radicals cause.

Tryptophan in quinoa helps ward off sugar cravings and helps prevent obesity.

Potassium in quinoa releases energy from fat, protein and carbohydrates during metabolism. Potassium also controls blood pressure and maintains fluid balance in the body, helps keep muscles strong, keep elimination regular, protects against heart disease and stroke, and guards against fatigue, stress and irritability.

Phosphorus helps maintain healthy kidneys, regulates fluid levels in the body and promotes healthy bones. It assists in hormonal health and provides efficient production and use of energy in the body. This is essential for your fat burning eating arrangement.

Whole grains such as quinoa, are an excellent source of fiber, which can lower your risk of cardiovascular disease. Fiber also makes you feel full without consuming more than you need. It helps bulk stools and eliminate toxins from your body, assisting in your liver and kidney functioning. Fiber also protects against colon cancer and may offer protection against gallstones.

The high antioxidant content of quinoa protects against roaming free radicals which can cause extensive damage to heart and other organs. These antioxidants include Vitamin E, selenium, phenolic acids, tocotrienols and phytic acid.

Phytoestrogens, which are plant compounds, are also abundant in whole grains such as quinoa. Phytoestrogens may positively affect many cellular metabolic processes, elasticity of blood vessels, bone metabolism and improve blood cholest-

terol levels. The plant lignans in quinoa convert into other lignans by our intestine's friendly flora, resulting in a capability to protect against breast and other cancers that are dependent on hormones, as well as protect against heart disease.

If you can find black quinoa, which is a Bolivian native plant, buy it for its reportedly superior nutritional qualities!

How To Prepare Quinoa

Quinoa can be purchased in bulk quantities at the natural foods store or in many grocery stores. You'll save more money by buying in bulk. Just be sure to store quinoa in a cool and dry area in a tightly sealed glass or ceramic container. This is important because you don't want the quinoa oils to go rancid from presence of air, sunlight and moisture.

To get rid of the sticky and bitter substance called saponin that coats the outer part of quinoa, make sure to rinse quinoa thoroughly in cold water before you cook it. This way, you will avoid indigestion that saponin can cause.

For persons who are allergic to other grains, the good news is that quinoa has a low gluten content, making it one of the least allergenic grains.

Cook quinoa using a formula of two parts water to one part grains quinoa. It will cook in approximately 15 minutes on the stovetop or in a rice cooker.

For variety and tasty soup treat, add your favorite vegetables to the water while the quinoa is cooking. Another suggestion is to serve quinoa with chopped scallion and mango after cooking.

Quinoa added in small amounts makes healthy baked goods. It can be cooked with orange juice (instead of water or broth) and served with honey as a delicious breakfast cereal. Or, add fruit and nuts to cooked quinoa for your morning cereal. Cubed butternut squash cooked with quinoa serves as a hearty and nutritious cereal for winter months.

Make a Middle Eastern tabouli using quinoa in place of the traditional couscous. You can even make pasta using quinoa in place of wheat.

Try adding sprouted quinoa to salads and lettuce wraps (it serves the same purpose as alfalfa sprouts). Another salad suggestion with a sassy, south-of-the-border flavor is to combine cooked quinoa with scallions, coriander, pinto beans and pumpkin seeds.

How Much To Eat

Typical serving size of quinoa is ¼ cup. When you use quinoa in recipes, use about one cup, or as indicated. This amount has about 117 grams carbohydrate, 9.8 grams fat, 10 grams fiber, 22.3 grams protein and 636 calories. You should aim for about three servings of whole grains each day, and eating quinoa is one way of making sure you reach that goal.

Rice (Basmati, Brown)

In our discussion of rice as a fat burning food consideration, we'll include basmati and brown rice in one section. The differences between brown, basmati rice and white rice is obvious. And it's more than just the fact that they have different color. In brown rice, only the outermost hull is removed, thus preserving essential nutrients. Further milling causes the rice to lose more of its color – and a lot more nutrients – but it's still unpolished at this state. Once the rice is polished, it results in white rice. It's the polishing that removes the healthy supportive essential fats from the rice. You want to avoid white rice at all costs. Concentrate instead on the basmati and brown rice varieties.

Did you know that rice is a critically important food, supplying approximately half of the daily calories for 50% of the world's population? And there are more than 8,000 different types of rice varieties. Further differentiation includes size categorization. It's either short grain, medium grain or long grain. Sticky rice is the short grain type, due to its high starch content. Long grain stays separate even after cooking, due to its lighter consistency. Obviously, medium grain rice is somewhere in between sticky and loose.

There's another differentiating classification, involving milling. There are two types of brown rice, fully unpolished, where the rice is very brown and the entire bran layer has not been removed, and partially unpolished, where the rice is a

light brown color and only part of the bran removed. Basmati rice is available in white and brown forms. The white basmati rice makes the flavors of food more distinct. It has an aromatic and nutlike fragrance, light texture and delicate flavor.

Brown and basmati rice are available year-round in supermarkets and grocery stores. The widest variety and selection of brown and basmati rice, however, will be in

Rice's Fat Fighting Benefits

Brown and basmati rice are low in calorie, and rich in niacin, manganese, selenium, iron and fiber. The most important fat burning benefit of rice, either brown or basmati rice, is the fiber content. Foods rich in fiber, such as brown and basmati rice, help reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke. Fiber also helps you to avoid abrupt changes in your blood sugar level and therefore is helpful in preventing diabetes. Fiber also helps you digest your food, bulks up stools and speeds elimination of toxins from the body.

Research has shown that eating brown and basmati rice can help lower high blood pressure. Niacin in brown rice, for example, may help to inhibit the free radical damage of cholesterol, and thus reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. Scientists reporting in the British Journal of Nutrition suggested that rice protein helps protect against atherosclerosis due to its ability to increase blood levels of nitric oxide.

Manganese in brown and basmati rice is a powerful antioxidant critical in the breakdown of amino acids and the production of energy in the body. Manganese is necessary for the metabolism of Vitamins B and E and also activates enzymes that help you digest foods and utilize their nutrients. Manganese helps regulate blood sugar levels. It also works as a constituent of some enzymes and an activator of others in key metabolic processes. One of the enzymes containing manganese, arginase, is used by the liver to detoxify ammonia created during the metabolism of amino acid. Magnesium nourishes the nerves and brain, promotes healthy bones and muscles, speeds up wound healing and helps break down fats and cholesterol.

Selenium in brown and basmati rice is a trace element that may be one of your most potent allies in fighting off cancer. Studies for more than two decades have shown the protective qualities of selenium in diet to reduce risk of breast, colorectal, lung, prostate and skin cancers. The antioxidant properties of selenium help to regenerate Vitamin C and E in the body so that fighting off of dangerous free radicals in the body can continue. Still other research shows that selenium's antioxidant properties reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. It also helps reduce the risk of arthritis.

Iron in brown and basmati rice is critically important for energy production. We all need iron in our diet, and many, especially women, are iron-deficient. Iron helps transport oxygen from the lungs to our muscles and other organs. When our bodies are low on iron, we feel fatigued, irritable, and may have a headache. It's a sure sign our oxygen levels are low, due to iron depletion. Iron also helps improve your concentration, is essential for women to prevent painful periods, and helps ward off infections, promotes strong bones and nails and lustrous hair.

Tryptophan in brown and basmati rice helps you to feel full without eating too much. It calms your nerves and aids in sleep. Tryptophan's key benefit for fat burning is that it reduces cravings for carbohydrates. Isn't rice a carbohydrate, you ask? Yes, but it is a good carbohydrate. When you eat a reasonable amount of brown or basmati rice in combination with your other fat burning foods, you are doing your body a whole lot of good. This isn't empty carbohydrate, but healthful carbohydrate.

How To Prepare Rice

Buy your brown or basmati rice in the grocery store or supermarket, or purchase from the bulk grain section at your health or whole foods store. Be sure the rice is kept in a container with a lid. Look for kernels that are unbroken, unscratched and undamaged. Also be sure there's no moisture in the container.

At home, store rice in a cool and dry area in an airtight container. You can store cooked rice in the refrigerator for about a week. Cooked rice will also keep in the freezer for up to six months.

When you cook brown rice, you first have to soak it in cold water for about a half hour. When you cook basmati rice, you just have to rinse it in cold water and drain. Place either type of rice in a heavy saucepan that has a lid, add two cups of water to one cup of rice, bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer. Cooking time will vary. Brown rice takes about 40 minutes, basmati about 30 minutes.

You can also reheat previously cooked rice. For each cup of rice, add two tablespoons of liquid. Cover the pan and heat on top of the stove for about 5 minutes. Try basmati rice with lemon and thyme, curried basmati rice, herbed basmati rice, perfumed basmati rice, and lime-infused basmati rice.

For serving ideas, try some of these. Add some chopped basil along with diced tomatoes to cooked basmati rice. You could also stir in some healthy nuts, curry powder or paste to your taste during the last five minutes' cooking time.

There's brown rice with fish, lemon-garlic brown rice, brown rice casseroles, cabbage soup with brown rice, lentils with brown rice. Try curried shrimp with brown rice, Southwest chicken with brown rice, kebabs with a side of brown rice, stir-fry with tofu and brown rice. And don't forget red beans and brown rice.

How Much To Eat

A typical serving size is one cup of rice, about 195 grams.

Spelt

Spelt is a type of wheat that is referred to as an ancient grain, which also includes millet. Actually, spelt has been around for much longer than wheat grain, but it contains much more nutrients.

The deep nutty flavor of spelt has gained it a lot of acceptance in today's health conscious society. It has a wonderful taste that makes it appealing as well as helpful to your fat burning regimen.

Spelt is available year-round in supermarkets and grocery stores, whole foods or specialty markets. It is sold in spelt flour, as hulled spelt or whole grain spelt (known as spelt berries).

Spelt's Fat Fighting Benefits

Spelt is an excellent choice to add to your fat burning eating arrangement. It is an excellent source of fiber, rich in riboflavin, manganese and tryptophan and a good source of thiamin, niacin, copper and iron. In fact, it's this combination that makes spelt such a wise choice for persons who have diabetes, migraines or atherosclerosis. Why? Riboflavin, or Vitamin B2, is an essential nutrient for cell energy production. It speeds the energy metabolism in your brain and muscle cells – which is also key to fat burning – and may help prevent the frequency of migraine attacks, for example. Riboflavin is also a co-factor in an enzyme that helps break-down the metabolism of homocysteine in the body. Homocysteine levels that become high are precursors to an increased risk of atherosclerosis and cardiovascular disease.

Niacin in spelt helps reduce total cholesterol and dangerous lipoprotein (a) levels found in blood plasma. Niacin is also a potent antioxidant that combats free radicals roaming the body before they can attack and destroy blood vessel walls. Niacin's benefits also include its ability to inhibit blood clot formation. And the fiber in spelt is also good for helping to reduce total and LDL (or bad) cholesterol levels. Fiber binds with bile acids (the ones that produce cholesterol) that get excreted through the feces. Niacin and fiber, along with riboflavin, offer powerful protection against heart attack and stroke. This is especially true in the case of cardiovascular protection for postmenopausal women who also have high cholesterol, high blood pressure or other cardiovascular disease symptoms.

Magnesium in spelt is involved with more than 300 enzymes, including those involving the body's use of glucose, as well as insulin secretion. Magnesium in spelt promotes healthy blood sugar control and reduces your risk of type 2 diabetes.

Gallstone protection is another benefit of adding spelt to your fat burning diet. The insoluble fiber in spelt helps speed digestion, moving food quickly through the intestine. It also lowers triglycerides (known as blood fats).

Fiber also offers protection against certain types of cancer, specifically breast cancer in pre-menopausal women. The phytonutrients known as plant lignans are converted to friendly flora in the intestines and offer protection against hormone-

dependent cancers, in addition to protecting against heart disease. Fiber also may offer protection against colon cancer.

Spelt consumption has also been linked to protection against childhood asthma, obesity, and premature death.

Tryptophan, an essential amino acid formed from proteins during digestion, helps ward off food cravings, helps improve your mood, soothes your nerves and anxieties, and helps you sleep. It's the serotonin that tryptophan releases in the brain that offers this wonderful protection.

Copper in spelt helps transport oxygen throughout the body, produces cellular energy and regulates nerve transmission, helps grow and strengthen bones, muscles, tissues and every bodily organ, stimulates the immune system to promote healing and fight infections, formation of red blood cells, proper absorption and utilization of iron. Copper also helps your body metabolize energy – key in your fat burning eating arrangement.

Iron in spelt helps transport oxygen to your blood, and also is essential for muscle protein. Iron traces can be found in the liver, spleen, muscle and bone marrow. For fat burning consideration, iron in spelt helps boost energy production, especially important during exercise and strenuous activity. Iron strengthens immunity, helps promote sleep, guards against anemia, and offers protection against cancer.

How To Prepare Spelt

You can find spelt in the grocery store in flour form and whole grain. They are available pre-packaged and in bulk containers. If you purchase bulk spelt, make sure the container has a covered lid and there's no visible moisture. Always buy from a trusted source to ensure maximum freshness.

Spelt flour is best kept in the refrigerator, while spelt grains should be kept in an airtight container in a cool, dry and dark place.

Before you can cook with spelt, you need to rinse spelt berries very thoroughly under cool running water. Be sure to remove any dirt or particles you find. Then

soak spelt berries in water for about eight hours, or soak overnight. Drain, rinse and figure three parts of water to each one part of spelt. Bring the mixture to a boil. Then turn the heat down, simmering for about an hour.

For usage suggestions, consider that you can substitute spelt flour for whole wheat flour in many recipes. Its nutty and sweet flavor make spelt an excellent choice for healthful and tasty breads, muffins and cookies.

Try Tuscan spelt and white bean (cannellini) soup. There's spelt banana bread, spelt pie crust. You can add flakes of spelt to tomato-based soups and stews. Chop some fresh rosemary, crush some garlic and cook spelt in whole grain form in olive oil. Serve hot with your meal.

Remember, if you have a recipe that calls for whole wheat flour, you can probably substitute spelt. Try it for its delicious taste and Fat Fighting Benefits!

How Much To Eat

Typical serving amount is 2 ounces of spelt flour per person. That equals 56.7 grams.

Sweet Potato

Sweet potato is a naturally sweet vegetable with a thin outer skin that may be orange, purple, white or yellow. Inside, the flesh is orange. Sweet potatoes vary in shape, from round, blocky ones with little points on the ends, to long, tubular versions with tapered ends.

The vegetable is available year-round.

Sweet Potato's Fat Fighting Benefits

Sweet potatoes have unique nutritional benefits. One benefit is in its root storage proteins that have been shown to have strong antioxidant properties. In fact, sweet potatoes have about 1/3 the antioxidant properties as glutathione, which is one of the body's internally produced antioxidants. This may help to explain some of the healing properties of sweet potatoes.

The root vegetable is also prominent in its ability to stabilize blood sugar levels and lower insulin resistance. For this reason it is very beneficial as an antidiabetic food. This blood sugar regulatory benefit is due to the carotenoids in sweet potatoes.

Sweet potatoes are a good source of Vitamin A (in beta carotene). They are also a very good source of Vitamin C and manganese, and provide good amounts of dietary fiber, copper, potassium, iron and Vitamin B-6.

Vitamin A, beta carotene and Vitamin C are very powerful antioxidants that protect the body from the damage of free radicals to cells and cell membranes. Because of this protective ability, these nutrients may help prevent heart disease and colon cancer. They are also anti-inflammatory and reduce inflammation in diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, asthma and osteoarthritis.

And if you smoke (or are around someone who does), sweet potatoes offer protection against the dangers to your lungs from smoke or secondhand smoke, due to the healing benefits of Vitamin A.

How To Prepare Sweet Potato

Choose sweet potatoes that are firm, feel heavy for their size, and don't have any cracks or soft spots. Don't buy sweet potatoes that are displayed in the refrigerated section, since the cold temperatures negatively affect their taste and nutritional value.

Store sweet potatoes in a cool, dark and dry place where they'll keep fresh for about 10 days. Do not leave in plastic bags. Make sure they get adequate ventilation. If they are exposed to sunlight or the temperature becomes too warm, they will start to sprout.

Organic sweet potatoes can be eaten with the skin and all. Otherwise, peel off the skin after cooking, since it may contain artificial dyes or wax.

Keep in mind that sweet potato flesh will oxidize after cutting, so either cook them immediately or place in a bowl of cold water until you are ready to use.

As for serving suggestions, there's always the traditional baked sweet potato, delicious in and of itself. It's even great cold for a snack or on a picnic.

There are many recipes for sweet potato pie, bread, muffins, puddings and other desserts. Surely there's one for your fat-burning taste buds as well.

Sweet potatoes are also good cubed and steamed with tofu and broccoli. Serve with a light vinaigrette dressing.

You can also puree or mash sweet potatoes and add some chopped chives for visual and taste appeal.

How Much To Eat

One medium size sweet potato (about 2 inches in diameter and 5 inches long) is a single serving size.

Wild Rice

Despite its name, wild rice is not rice at all. It is a grass. Most of the wild rice sold today in the U.S. is specially cultivated, not even grown in the wild. Wild rice is an aquatic seed grown as an annual and is found mostly in freshwater lakes in the states of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota and in Canada.

When cooked, wild rice has a nutty, rich flavor. Sometimes it's described as being smoky, with a chewy texture. The grains themselves are elongated and slender (about one half inch), and nearly black in color with a bit of green. Colors can vary, however, from a medium brown to deep black.

There are two types of wild rice, foraged wild (harvested from lakes and rivers in the Great Lakes region) and hybrid (farmed in the states of California and Idaho and the Canadian provinces of Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan).

Wild rice is available in three grades: giant or long grain, which is earthy flavored and expensive, extra fancy or medium grain, which costs a bit less than giant and is the most common wild rice, and select or short grain, which may have some broken kernels and is best used in soups or casseroles or in combination with brown rice.

Wild rice is available year-round in supermarkets and grocery stores, whole foods and specialty stores. It comes in packages that may read “Indian harvested,” or “organic,” as well as heirloom varieties. If you can find it, look for the “hand harvested, organic and from the Great Lakes region” wild rice.

Wild Rice’s Fat Fighting Benefits

Wild rice is rich in protein, minerals, B Vitamins, folic acid and carbohydrates. While wild rice is high in carbohydrates (17.5 grams in ½ cup of cooked wild rice), it only has 83 calories!

The folic acid content of wild rice actually trumps that of brown rice. In the same ½ cup measurement, wild rice contains 21.3 micrograms of folic acid compared with brown rice’s 3.9 micrograms.

Folic acid helps red and white blood cells to form and mature. It is also a key vitamin in the repair and functioning of cells. Folic acid may help prevent cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer’s disease and colon cancer and is especially important for pregnant women.

Protein in wild rice is an important macronutrient. Protein is a component of every cell in your body. Your body uses protein to build and repair tissues, to make enzymes, help build bones, cartilage and muscles, and to produce hormones and other chemicals in the body. Since the human body doesn’t store protein, you have to constantly replace it. Sufficient protein helps rebuild muscle tissue after strenuous exercise. Protein gives you an energy boost and helps metabolize fats.

Carbohydrates in wild rice convert to energy you need for muscles as well as chemical reactions in your body.

Fiber in wild rice helps bulk stools and speeds elimination of toxins from the body, aids in digestion, and helps you feel full without eating too much. Fiber is your fat burning friend!

How To Prepare Wild Rice

When you buy wild rice, be sure to wash it thoroughly before cooking. Put the rice in a bowl filled with cold water. Stir it with your hands or a spoon a few times and put aside for about five minutes. Dirt and debris will float to the water surface. Then pour off the water.

To cook, use one cup rice in 1-3/4 cups water for about three quarters of an hour. It will take about one hour to cook. Make sure not to overcook the rice, or it will have too much starch. You'll know the rice is done when all the liquid has been absorbed and the rice isn't mushy.

You may need to adjust your taste to become accustomed to wild rice. Try mixing it with brown and/or basmati rice until you find you can eat it by itself.

Wild rice is a great side dish. It can also be added to rice pilaf and soup recipes. Wild rice is especially good in vegetable soups. Try wild rice mixed with salad and in stuffing recipes.

Grind up some wild rice into flour and add to batters you use for muffins, pancakes and breads for its rich nutty flavor!

Here's a terrific salad recipe idea using wild rice. Add cooked wild rice to chopped, sliced, diced and/or shredded bell peppers, cabbage, cucumber, celery, tomatoes, carrots and scallions. Toss in a few delicious nuts (how about pine nuts, macadamia nuts or walnuts?), season with fresh oregano and sage, minced, plus balsamic vinegar and pepper to taste. Yummy!

Mushrooms and wild rice are a tasty combination, and a great side dish to an entrée. Try a wild-rice stuffed squash for hearty winter meals.

Go ahead and experiment. Wild rice will soon have you as a convert!

How Much To Eat

Typical recipe portions call for about one cup of wild rice. Average serving size is about half a cup of wild rice.

Chapter 6

Fat Fighting Foods

FATS

Avocados

Avocados are a fruit that's been around for about 7,000 years! There are several varieties of avocado – each with their own unique flavor, texture and appearance. The most common avocado varieties in the United States include the Gwen, with its large oval shape and pebbly, thick green skin. The Gwen is available from late winter through early summer. There's also the Fuerte, with its thin and smooth skin and pale green, but creamy, flesh. The Fuerte is medium to large in size and pear shaped. It is available fall through springtime. The Haas is probably the most common avocado found in U.S. stores, distinguished by its purplish-black skin that's pebbly in texture. Haas is available year-round.

Other varieties include the Zutano, with a shiny yellow-green skin, pear shape and large size. This version is available from fall until early winter. Then there's the Pinkerton, with its long pear shape and pebbly green skin and pale green flesh. This fruit is available winter through spring. Finally, there's the Reed, or summertime, avocado. This fruit is only available in summer and early fall, and has buttery yellow flesh and an outer skin that's thick, green and slightly rough in texture.

Avocado's Fat Fighting Benefits

Avocados are about 22% fat. But don't let that stop you from eating the fruit! They're also high in protein and they're sodium-free and cholesterol-free. Besides their rich and appealing taste, avocados provide more than 25 essential vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients.

They're so nutrient dense, they're an ideal food to introduce to infants when they're able to consume table foods.

Avocados also contain nutrients that help to promote graceful aging, to help prevent various diseases. They're also a great assist to maintaining healthy weight, since they're a terrific alternative to salad dressings and sandwich spreads that are loaded with saturated fats and harmful cholesterol.

In fact, avocados act as a nutrient booster. They enable the body to absorb nutrients that are more fat-soluble, like beta carotene and lutein, in other foods that are eaten along with the fruit.

Avocados contain beneficial folate, which lowers your homocysteine levels in your bloodstream. This may help prevent numerous diseases, including Alzheimer's, stroke and heart attack. Folate also promotes healthy tissue development, along with cell development.

Vitamin E in avocado also protects against heart disease, as well as various cancer types. And it has been shown to slow the aging process as well.

The glutathione in avocado is a powerful antioxidant that helps to quench the damage by free radicals to cells, thus warding off disease.

The lutein content of avocado offers protection against eye disease (macular degeneration, cataracts, etc.) and prostate cancer.

The monounsaturated fat in avocado helps to lower your bad cholesterol (or LDL), and helps to boost good cholesterol (or HDL). Monounsaturated fat in avocado is also easily burned for energy!

Did you know that avocado has more than twice the potassium of a banana? And potassium helps maintain fluid balance and lower cholesterol.

Beta-sitosterol also helps promote lower cholesterol levels. In addition, beta-sitosterol works to inhibit cholesterol absorption in the body.

How To Prepare Avocados

Avocado is often used in salads or as a dip. It is also used to make soups in Latin cuisine.

They're also used to make salsa.

When shopping for avocado, look for firm fruit that feels heavy for its size. Avoid fruit that has obvious signs of bruising or soft spots.

Avocado can be ripened on the counter for 3-10 days. If you want to speed up the process, place the avocado in a brown paper bag or a fruit ripening container.

Once ripe, avocados can be stored in the refrigerator for about one week.

How Much To Eat

Consume 1/5 ripe avocado (about 1 ounce) or one cup sliced in recipes.

Canola Oil

Canola oil comes from canola seed, which is from a variety of the rapeseed plant, but one that is non-toxic. That is because the seed from canola has a reduced content of glucosinolates and erucic acid. Note that traditional rapeseed oil is considered unsuitable for humans due to its 20-55% content of erucic acid. But canola oil only contains about 2% erucic acid – a safe amount for human consumption. There is, however, low erucic acid rapeseed oil, which is known as LEAR oil, and it contains a bit more erucic acid than canola oil, or under 5% total fatty acids.

As far as glucosinolates, these are water-soluble compounds that contain sulfur and are present in both canola and rapeseed oil. While glucosinolates have shown potential protection against colon cancer in some studies, generally they are not desirable because they may have some negative effect on thyroid hormones, or liver and kidney difficulties and reproduction. You don't have to worry about glucosinolates in canola oil, since the amount is far less than in rapeseed oil.

Canola oil is considered a good fat, and is generally less expensive than other oils. It is available year-round in supermarkets and grocery stores, as well as whole foods markets.

Canola Oil's Fat Fighting Benefits

According to some experts, canola oil is an excellent source of good fat. High in monounsaturated fat, canola oil has precursor amounts of omega 6 and omega 3 polyunsaturated fatty acids, linoleic acid and alpha-linolenic acid (ALA). It is also very low in saturated fat. The ratio of the omega 6 and omega 3 in canola oil is a healthful low 2:1 ratio, whereas most vegetable oils have much more omega 6 and omega 3 fatty acids.

Canola oil is an excellent source of antioxidants, which protect your body against the damage to cells from roaming free radicals. Free radical damage can lead to heart attack and stroke. Free radicals are also thought to induce aging, damage DNA, and stimulate cancerous growth. Antioxidant protection, like that from canola oil, is a great deterrent to free radical damage.

Antioxidants in canola oil include Vitamin E, phenolic acids, and flavonoids. Cold-pressed canola oil contains more antioxidants than any other extraction process.

Lowered blood pressure is another benefit of consuming canola oil. This happens because of the phyosterols in canola oil which reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. Recently, researchers have shown that canola oil offers promise of protecting the human body against certain cancers such as breast, colon and prostate.

Good news for fat burning aficionados! Canola oil, which is a rich source of monounsaturated fat, has low saturated fat and good amounts of polyunsaturated fat. This suggests that canola oil may be optimum for those who are interested in shedding pounds.

It's the monounsaturated fat in canola oil which is so prominent in preventing incidence of cardiovascular disease and cancer. In fact, canola oil contains almost as much monounsaturated fat as olive oil.

Vitamin E in canola oil also offers the benefit of reducing oxidative stress, including cancer and heart disease conditions.

Omega 3 fatty acids in canola oil are thought to reduce the risk of blood clotting as well as heart rhythm abnormalities. It may also provide an important anti-inflammatory effect in human blood vessels.

How To Prepare Canola Oil

Make sure you purchase cold-pressed canola oil for maximum nutrient value. Store it in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight.

Use canola oil for salad dressings, like you'd use in a Greek lentil salad, as well as Mediterranean salads.

Use canola oil in hummus (the recipe will call for 5 tablespoons of canola oil). Try it in a sweet pepper stir-fry. Add canola oil to your spices and other ingredients for marinades for barbeque. And canola oil is great to use in baking breads, muffins, cookies, cakes, strudels and other desserts.

How Much To Eat

A typical serving size of canola oil is about 1 tablespoon. Be guided by the particular recipe you're using, however. Some salad dressings call for 1/3 cup, while others call for 1 tablespoon.

Coconut Oil

Coconut oil is made from coconuts. It is considered one of the good fats. Extra virgin coconut oil is best – it's made from fresh coconuts that have been opened less than 48 hours after harvesting. Organic coconuts are grown without any dangerous chemicals, fertilizers or solvents.

Organic extra virgin coconut oil can be purchased year-round in whole foods markets and some grocery stores and supermarkets.

Coconut Oil's Fat Fighting Benefits

First of all, let's talk about how coconut oil can help with weight loss. After all, this is all about fat burning, isn't it? The healthy medium chain fatty acids that are in coconut oil are responsible for promoting weight loss. These fatty acids go

straight to the liver where they become converted on the spot into energy – just like you get from carbohydrates. So, they're not just circulating through your bloodstream like some other fats. Your body is able to use the coconut oil fat to produce energy, and it's not stored as body fat. Go, coconut oil!

These medium chain fatty acids in coconut oil boost your body's metabolism to burn calories – and promote weight loss. That's more excellent news for your fat burning eating regimen.

Coconut oil also enhances brain functioning, including cognition, memory and concentration. It also assists the thyroid functioning.

Antioxidants such as Vitamin E in coconut oil offer protection against seizures, Alzheimer's disease and other degenerative diseases. The antioxidant capabilities of coconut oil offer protection against dangerous free radicals and thus offer cardiovascular protection.

Coconut oil also helps to lower blood pressure, and lowers blood sugar levels. It supports your immune system and guards against infection. Coconut oil also promotes healthy skin and youthful appearance.

The lauric acid in coconut oil provides anti-viral, antibacterial and anti-inflammatory benefits. This may help prevent and treat such viruses as HIV, herpes, influenza, various pathogenic bacteria and other microbial diseases.

How To Prepare Coconut Oil

When you stir-fry or sauté vegetables, poultry, fish or eggs, try substituting coconut oil instead of any other oil for a healthy and tasty treat.

Did you know you can make your own mayonnaise with coconut oil?

And coconut oil added to salads – just a little sprinkling is enough – will add flair and flavor. A hint of the islands that's healthy and delicious!

Add coconut oil to your juices and smoothies to get maximum benefit of the lauric acid in the coconut oil.

How Much To Eat

Typical serving size is 1 tablespoon. Of course, depending on a particular recipe, you may use more. For therapeutic dosages, use 3-4 tablespoons per day.

Flax Seed and Flaxseed Oil

Flax seed and flaxseed oil come from the flax plant. Originally used for fiber in Europe, flax seed and flaxseed oil gradually became popular as a healing herb. Today it is a staple for vegans and mostly vegetarian eaters, as well as those who want to embark on a fat burning eating regime.

Flaxseed oil is composed of one-third oil, and the rest is protein, fiber and mucilage. Flaxseed oil can be purchased year-round in health food stores and supplement stores. Make sure you buy certified organic flaxseed oil.

The seeds of the flax plant are very small. They look a lot like sesame seeds. Inexpensive, flax seeds are available year-round in health food and natural foods stores.

Flax Seeds and Flaxseed Oil's Fat Fighting Benefits

You've probably heard a great deal about the benefits of flax seeds and flaxseed oil lately. The reason for the hoopla is quite simple: flax seeds and flaxseed oil are the highest food source for the all-important omega 3 fatty acids.

But that's not all. Flax seeds also contain fiber, protein, vitamins and minerals and lignans. The fiber in flax seeds is actually both types of fiber – soluble and insoluble fiber. Fiber acts as a natural laxative and helps clean out your colon of toxic waste. The fiber also provides food for your intestines' friendly flora that keeps digestion working properly and keeps disease-producing organisms at bay.

Lignans in flax seeds are full of anti-viral, anti-bacterial and anti-cancer properties. In fact, there are 100 times more lignans in flax seeds than in wheat bran, which is the next best source. They are also believed to have strong antioxidant properties as well, which benefits your heart and protects against cardiovascular disease and stroke, among other illnesses. There is evidence that the lignans in

flax seeds are particularly effective in preventing estrogen-dependant cancers like breast cancer. Flax seed's lignans also help regulate estrogen levels in women who are post-menopause as well as offer them protection against heart disease. Note that there are no lignans in flaxseed oil, only in flax seeds. In flaxseed oil, the lignans and fiber are removed during production.

Ground flax seed is also an excellent source of Vitamin E, beta carotene, potassium, magnesium, manganese, zinc and calcium.

Flax seeds and flaxseed oil also contains lecithin, which aids digestion, stabilizes blood glucose levels, protects the heart and inhibits formation of tumors. Flaxseed oil helps relieve gastrointestinal pains, infections and hemorrhoids.

Protein in flax seeds and flaxseed oil contains the complete amino acid requirements for your body. The protein is easily digested.

The omega 3 fatty acids in flax seeds and flaxseed oil are the best news, however. These concentrated amounts of alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), omega 3 essential fatty acid, and omega 6 essential fatty acid. The human brain is largely composed of fats known as phospholipids, and these are made from the essential fatty acids. Taking flax seeds and flaxseed oil, then, helps your brain by providing an excellent source of the omega 3 fatty acids. These fatty acids help improve concentration, cognition and memory and mood. Omega 3 fatty acids also offer protection against cardiovascular disease since they help reduce cholesterol, blood pressure, formation of arterial plaque and heart arrhythmia. Omega 3 fatty acids have also been shown in studies to kill certain cancer cells without harming nearby healthy cells, and can help patients reduce use of certain medications. Omega 3 fatty acids in flax seeds and flaxseed oil helps with skin problems such as acne, psoriasis and eczema, and can also help improve your body's reaction to stress. Flax seeds and flaxseed oil also help counter inflammation.

Flax seeds also contains mucilage. The mucilage acts as a gentle and natural laxative. Flaxseed oil is particularly beneficial for people with sensitive stomachs, as it acts as a buffer for excess acids in the stomach.

Flax seeds and flaxseed oil help to increase your energy, stamina and vitality. Energy consumption helps you metabolize fats, protein and carbohydrates and is a great boost to fat burning. The increased metabolic rate also helps you to lose weight.

How To Prepare Flax Seeds or Flaxseed Oil

Flaxseed Oil – Flaxseed oil is available in oil or capsule form, but it is best taken as oil. You could purchase flaxseed oil capsules, but you'd need to take a lot (about 10-15 capsules) to equal the contents of just one tablespoon of oil. So, oil is easier and quicker. No contest.

And it's not a bad taste, really. Flaxseed oil tastes on the nutty side and is an easy addition to protein shakes, juice or water. You can even take flaxseed oil by itself.

Flax Seeds – Buy flax seeds at a whole foods store where you can purchase in bulk quantities. A 20 pound supply of flax seed will last one person about a year. Make sure to buy flax seed whole, rather than ground, since the potency of ground flax seed may be compromised by improper handling and storage. And, when you store your whole flax seeds at home, be sure to keep in a clean, dry area at room temperature. It will last about a year.

Only grind the flax seed when you are ready to use it, for maximum freshness and nutritional value. That's because oxidation sets in when flax seeds are exposed to air and they degrade quickly once ground. If you have some left over, however, you can refrigerate it in an airtight container for a few days or store in the freezer for up to a month. Again, however, the best method is to grind only what you need and use immediately.

You can add flax seeds whole in a number of baked goods such as bread dough, muffins, cookies or pancakes. Just add them on top of these foods before you bake for a wonderful crunch and taste treat.

Flax seeds can be used as a substitute for oil in baking in some recipes. For example, if a recipe's ingredients include 1/3 cup of oil, you can substitute with one cup of ground flax seed. The ratio is 3:1. Alternatively, the flour in a recipe can be re-

duced by about 25% and replaced with ground flax seed. If you do use ground flax seed in your baking, be aware that the food will tend to brown quicker, so keep an eye on it.

Grind up some flax seeds in a coffee bean grinder or blender and add to almost any food. You will find the taste and the appearance of the food you add the ground flax seeds to will be enhanced. For example, add ground flax seeds to your favorite beverage, or sprinkle it on your cereal or yogurt.

When eating ground flax seeds, make sure you drink a lot of water.

How Much To Eat

General recommended dosage of flaxseed oil is one tablespoon daily per 100 pounds of body weight. For flax seeds, the daily recommendation is 2-3 tablespoons per day per 100 pounds of body weight, taken one tablespoon at a time.

Almonds

Almonds, what we think of as nuts, are actually the seed that comes from the fruit of the almond tree. But these seeds are hard-cased inside the almond tree fruit much like a peach pit resides in the center of a peach. Almonds are off-white inside, and their outside is a grooved and thin brown-colored skin that's encased in a hard shell. That's why we think of them as nuts: they chew like nuts, have the consistency of nuts, and they're nutritious, too!

There are two categories of almonds. There are sweet almonds and bitter ones. We eat the sweet variety. These sweet almonds have an oval shape, are somewhat malleable and have a taste that's buttery. You can buy them either unshelled or shelled in the markets. Beyond that, almonds are available whole, slivered or sliced, and blanched (with the skin removed) or unblanched. Bitter almonds are not edible, and contain toxic substances. They are, however, processed carefully and used to make almond oil. Almond oil is used to flavor foods (almond extract) and in the production of a liqueur like Amaretto. All the toxins are removed during the processing of almond oil.

Almonds can be purchased year-round in supermarkets and grocery stores, in whole foods and health foods markets.

Almonds' Fat Fighting Benefits

Besides tasting great, almonds provide a wide range of health benefits – and fat burning capabilities. Although they do have calories and a fair amount of fat, it's the good fat – the monounsaturated fat that lowers cholesterol and helps prevent heart attack and stroke. Almonds are also rich in dietary fiber, Vitamin E, manganese and potassium, and are a very good source of magnesium and tryptophan and a good source of copper, riboflavin and phosphorus.

The dietary fiber in almonds can also help you lose weight, or keep weight off. That may be due to the satisfying effect of the fiber in almonds, the fact that you feel fuller and eat less. Fiber also aids digestion, provides energy, bulks stools and speeds elimination of toxins from the body.

Tryptophan in almonds also assists you in feeling satisfied and full. You're likely to eat less, not only in this meal, but also in subsequent meals. Tryptophan releases serotonin in the brain, which makes you feel good and helps control mood, and combat stress.

Vitamin E in almonds is a powerful antioxidant. Besides also helping to reduce cholesterol, and provide heart protection, Vitamin E also helps in improve circulation, assists in proper blood clotting, promotes wound healing, and also alleviates premenstrual syndrome and may protect against certain types of breast cancer.

Phosphorus in almonds is essential for bone health, growth, development and repair. It also stimulates sexual function, provides essential nutrients to nerves, is vital for brain and muscle tissue, and is present in white blood cells. Phosphorus also provides energy, helps to digest protein and helps break down sugars.

Manganese metabolizes fats, carbohydrate and protein and provides energy. It also maintains blood sugar levels, is necessary for the nervous system and for proper growth, development and repair of bones and teeth.

Magnesium in almonds improves blood flow, as well as oxygen throughout the body. Magnesium also prevents damage from free radicals, promotes energy, and helps maintain healthy bones, arteries and heart. Magnesium helps metabolize protein, carbohydrates and fats and aids in digestion.

Potassium in almonds lowers blood pressure, regulates cells' water balance, keeps muscles strong and releases energy from proteins, carbohydrates and fats during metabolism. Potassium also may help protect you against heart disease, diabetes, obesity and kidney disease. It works to keep your bowels moving and eliminates toxins from your body. Potassium also alleviates stress, cuts down on irritability and confusion.

The B vitamin, riboflavin, helps the body convert food into energy, is helpful for strong hair and nails growth, and may assist in treatment of carpal tunnel syndrome and cataracts. Riboflavin is also essential in the production of neurotransmitters, which aid in overall emotional health and well-being.

Copper is necessary for nerve function, bone growth and to help the body properly utilize sugar. It works along with Vitamin C to make connective tissue known as elastin. Copper is also a strong antioxidant, offering protection against dangerous free radicals and warding off heart attack and stroke.

How To Prepare Almonds

You can buy almonds in packages at the grocery store and supermarket. They are also available in bulk quantities in whole foods and health food stores. If you buy in bulk, make sure your vendor has a good turnover of bulk items to ensure freshness. Inspect the nuts (which should be in a covered container) for any signs of insects or debris. You don't want any that are shriveled, limp or not uniform in color. Also, smell the almonds: you're looking for a sweet, nutty aroma. If you smell a bitter or rancid aroma, don't buy them!

Almonds must be stored in an airtight container in a cool and dry place away from heat and light (especially direct sunlight). You can keep them in the refrigerator for several months or in the freezer for about one year. Remember that al-

mond pieces and slivers will go rancid much quicker than whole almonds. Unshelled almonds have the longest shelf life.

To chop almonds: You can run them through a food processor, placed on pulse, to chop easily. Don't run it too long, however, or you'll wind up with almond butter.

To remove almond skins: Almond skins can be removed by quickly blanching them. Remove as soon as the skin starts to swell. Drain and rinse under cold water. The final step is to pinch with your thumb and forefinger. The skin should then come off easily.

Recipe suggestions include eating them raw, right out of your hand. Also, a few almonds sprinkled on salads are great (whole or slivered or chopped). Make your own trail mix with almonds, apple slices and other fruits and nuts.

Remember that almond butter you made by pulsing the almonds too long? You can use that to add to a breakfast or protein shake for wonderful taste and pizzazz.

There's also chicken salad with almonds, green beans with slivered almonds, cold rice salad with currents, almonds and garden peas. Vegetables are always perked up with the addition of sliced almonds. Add almonds to yogurt and fruit for a quick and nutritious snack.

Desserts with almonds as an ingredient are numerous. Here are just a few ideas. Almond biscotti, almond granola, toasted almond cheesecake, almond tart, raspberry almond torte, low-fat almond rice cookies, pear-almond clafoutis with red wine glaze.

How Much To Eat

Average serving size is 1/4 cup – or a handful of almonds. In recipes, be guided by portion size and ingredient measurement. One serving size of dry roasted almonds contains 205.96 calories.

Brazil Nuts

Brazil nuts come from – surprise – Brazil. Actually, they come from a giant tree called *Bertholletia excelsa* that grows in South America's Amazon River Basin. They are not a true nut, but a seed, and are encased in a hard shell with sections like an orange inside. But we refer to them as nuts, so they're called Brazil nuts in America.

Brazil nuts, which have a somewhat earthy taste, are available in many grocery stores and supermarkets, but are almost always available in whole foods and health food markets.

Brazil Nuts' Fat Fighting Benefits

Brazil nuts, although they contain fat (but it's the good unsaturated fat), are loaded with protein, selenium, manganese, thiamin and phytosterols and a good source of zinc, calcium, Vitamin E and fiber.

Selenium is a potent antioxidant that has been linked to reduced risk of heart disease and cancer of the lungs, breast, prostate and bowel. Selenium helps to neutralize the effects of roaming dangerous free radicals in the body before they can wreak havoc on cells. The selenium content of Brazil nuts actually makes the protein content complete. This is due to the fact that Brazil nuts, unlike most plant proteins, contain all the amino acids necessary for optimum human use.

Vitamin E, like selenium, is a powerful antioxidant that helps protect against cardiovascular disease and cancer. It also helps with circulation, promotes wound healing and offers relief for PMS.

Zinc in Brazil nuts aids in digestion and helps metabolize protein, fat and carbohydrate.

Calcium is necessary for maintenance and development of healthy teeth and bones. It also controls blood pressure, assists with weight loss, and combats the risk of colon cancer.

Phytosterols in Brazil nuts are known to reduce cholesterol in the human body. They also help reduce the risk of certain cancers and also boost the immune system functionality.

Magnesium helps your body properly utilize carbohydrate, fat and protein through metabolization. It's good for energy, and promotes healthy and strong bones, teeth, heart and nerves.

Thiamin, a B vitamin, is essential for the body to use carbohydrate as a source of energy. It also metabolizes amino acids. Every cell in your body requires thiamin. It helps in the production of hydrochloric acid for digestion, enhances circulation and promotes healthy brain functioning. Thiamin helps with muscle tone in the intestines, stomach and heart and retards the aging process. It may also improve arterial blockage and glucose tolerance.

Fiber in Brazil nuts helps you to feel full and satisfied while eating less. It aids in digestion and bulks stools, speeding toxins away from the body.

How To Prepare Brazil Nuts

Brazil nuts are only harvested by hand, usually in January during good weather in the Amazon Basin. But they are generally found year-round either shelled or unshelled in the U.S.

It's easy to store unshelled Brazil nuts for a few months in a cool, dry place. Shelled Brazil nuts must be kept refrigerated in a tightly sealed container. They'll last this way for several months.

To open Brazil nut shells, first soak them in water and boil to make the shell softer.

Eat Brazil nuts by themselves as a snack. For a really wonderful treat, dip them in dark chocolate – but use sparingly! Brazil nuts already contain fat, and chocolate just adds to the fat. But, on occasion, you can indulge. Dark chocolate contains a lot of healthful antioxidants.

Brazil nuts can also be sliced, chopped, diced or ground to use in recipes for cookies, cakes, breads, stuffing and many desserts. Their taste is similar to macadamia nuts, so you can substitute Brazil nuts for them in many recipes.

Try cheesecake with a Brazil nut crust, salad with Brazil nuts and walnuts, spinach with a Brazil nut topping, or Brazil nut-crust pork chops.

How Much To Eat

Average serving size is between 6-8 Brazil nuts, or one ounce or 30 grams, respectively. One ounce contains about 186 calories. You should only eat them 2-3 times per week and use them to replace other fats in your diet.

Macadamia Nuts

Macadamia nuts are always associated with Hawaii. They're actually a native of northeast Australia but are now grown commercially in Hawaii as well. Usually, you'll see them in packages of chocolate covered macadamia nuts with a photo of a lovely Hawaiian girl in a grass skirt.

Macadamia nuts are also sold commercially in the States in sealed tins as shelled nuts. The nuts have a crunchy texture and a rich, creamy and delicious flavor. Some liken the flavor of macadamia nuts to that of coconut.

Macadamia nuts are available year-round in most grocery stores, supermarkets, whole foods and health food stores.

Macadamia Nuts' Fat Fighting Benefits

Loaded with protein, dietary fiber, minerals, vitamins and phytonutrients, macadamia nuts are also low in sodium and free of cholesterol and Trans fatty acids. They do contain fat, but it's the good or healthy monounsaturated fat. As long as you don't overdo it in your nut consumption each week, and use the nuts as a replacement for some other fat, go ahead and enjoy some delicious macadamia nuts on occasion. There is evidence that consumption of macadamia nuts either helps with weight loss or at least doesn't add pounds. This is due to the metabolizing of the monounsaturated fat in macadamia nuts.

Macadamia nuts contain a rich amount of palmitoleic acid. This is a monounsaturated fatty acid that works to lower cholesterol and may help the body metabolize fat, as well as reduce stored fat in the body.

The protein in macadamia nuts comprises the essential and non-essential amino acids your body needs. This plays an important role in helping to build muscle structure and the development of both blood plasma and connective tissue.

Macadamia nuts have excellent amounts of potassium, iron, phosphorus, magnesium and calcium. They have good amounts of zinc, copper and selenium.

Potassium in macadamia nuts helps regulate blood pressure and fluid levels and promotes healthy heart activity. It helps flush out the kidneys, alleviates pain and acts as a natural tranquilizer.

Iron helps to promote your body's metabolism, eases stress and provides resistance to disease. It also promotes healthy bones, teeth, skin and nails. Iron transports oxygen from the lungs to every bodily organ. Without sufficient iron in your body, you will feel fatigued, irritable and may have migraines.

Phosphorus, along with calcium, helps build strong bones, teeth and assists in cell growth and repair. Phosphorus also helps regulate fluid levels and keeps your kidneys healthy.

Calcium assists with nerve transmission, stabilizing heart rhythm, and is necessary for the development, growth and repair of teeth and bones. It also helps with proper blood clotting.

Magnesium is essential to metabolizing carbohydrates, protein and fat and provides necessary energy. Magnesium is important for maintenance and growth of bones and teeth, heart and arteries.

Zinc is a potent anti-inflammatory that is instrumental in wound, burn and injury healing. It aids in metabolizing protein and phosphorus and helps improve digestion. It can heal ulcers, colds and cold sores. Zinc is also a component of both insulin and the male reproductive fluid.

Copper works in concert with Vitamin C to help form elastin. It also assists in the formation of red blood cells. Copper is important in formation of healthy bones, and in the color and appearance of hair and skin. Copper helps to oxidize glucose and release energy.

Selenium works to preserve elasticity of tissues. It is necessary for proper protein utilization and for the healthy functioning of white and red blood cells. It is associated with reduced risk of heart attack and certain cancers due to its high antioxidant properties. Selenium may offer protection against diabetes and diseases associated with diabetes. In addition, selenium helps improve mental states, combats stress, depression and fatigue and may help with Alzheimer's disease.

Vitamin E, along with selenium, acts as a powerful antioxidant in the body, protecting it against the damage of free radicals.

Fiber in macadamia nuts helps move your digestive tract, stimulates removal of toxins from your body, and makes you feel fuller without eating as much.

All of this is good news for your fat burning eating regime.

How To Prepare Macadamia Nuts

You can buy macadamia nuts in the store in packages, tins or in bulk at some locations. If you buy in bulk, be sure they're in a covered container. Inspect to ensure there are no insects or evidence of moisture.

They're most often sold shelled, and either raw or roasted. You want to buy light-colored and well-shaped macadamia nuts. Store shelled nuts in a tightly sealed container in the refrigerator where they'll keep for about two months. You can store unshelled macadamia nuts at room temperature for about a year.

Macadamia nuts are great eaten alone, or covered in chocolate for a rare treat. They're also terrific in desserts, as a crust for seafood like halibut, added to salads, roasts or casseroles.

Here is just a smattering of recipe possibilities:

Macadamia nut bread, cookies, muffins, cheesecake, bars, crisps, ahi-encrusted with macadamia nuts, chicken breasts with macadamia-nut crust or macadamia nut torte.

To crack a macadamia nut shell, place the nut on an extra hard surface like concrete or a flatrock. It's better if the surface has a groove to contain the nut. Strike the nut firmly, but don't smash it, using a hammer or rock.

To roast macadamia nuts, first shell them and rinse in hot water. Drain for a half hour. Spread nuts in a baking pan or cookie sheet and place in a preheated 3500 oven for 10-15 minutes. Then immediately reduce heat to 2500 and let the nuts brown. Be sure to turn them occasionally. You'll know they're done when they've turned a nice golden brown color. That will usually be about 30-45 minutes at the 2500 heat. Take them out of the oven and allow to cool thoroughly.

How Much To Eat

Average serving size of macadamia nuts is 10-12 nuts, about one ounce or 30 grams. While they do have a fairly high fat content, it's the good fat. Still, you should only eat macadamia nuts about 2-3 times per week. And be sure to use them in place of another fat in your diet.

Walnuts

Walnuts come from a walnut tree, one that's both ornamental and regal. While there are many walnut tree species, only three main types of walnuts are consumed. These are the English or Persian walnut, the black walnut and the white walnut. In the U.S., the English walnut is the most popular. It has a lighter shell that's easily broken with a nutcracker. The black walnut shell is much tougher and the nut has a pungent flavor. White walnuts are somewhat oilier and sweeter than the other two, but they're not as acceptable as either English or black walnuts.

The kernel of the walnut contains two lumpy, bumpy lobes that are brown and hard. They look like two halves of the human brain. Inside, cracked open, the

lobes sort of resemble a butterfly. The lobes are whitish colored, covered with a thin light-brown skin.

Walnuts' Fat Fighting Benefits

Walnuts are an excellent source of Omega 3 fatty acids, a very good source of manganese and a good source of copper and tryptophan, B vitamins, Vitamin E and fiber.

Omega 3 fatty acids, especially alpha linoleic acid and phytosterols, help reduce triglyceride levels. This reduces the formation of plaque on arterial walls that could lead to heart attack or stroke. Omega 3 fatty acids increase the good cholesterol (or HDL), and reduce the bad cholesterol (or LDL). Walnuts contain a higher concentration of Omega 3 fatty acids than all other nuts.

The alpha linolenic acid in walnuts promotes healthy bone development. Omega 3 fatty acids also provide anti-inflammatory benefits and stimulate brain function.

Walnuts contain good amounts of manganese and copper. These two minerals are essential co-factors (they work together) in many enzymes that are important antioxidant defenses. Our body's production of energy requires both manganese and copper to work efficiently.

Ellagic acid is also present in walnuts. This antioxidant compound helps to block metabolic pathways that could lead to cancer development. Ellagic acid protects against dangerous free radicals and prevents cancer-causing cells from developing or replicating.

Fiber and tryptophan in walnuts – although you wouldn't think of them in combination – actually do similar things for your fat burning regimen. Both fiber and tryptophan help you feel full and satisfied while eating less. Fiber helps in digestion and speeds removal of toxins from your body. Tryptophan releases serotonin in the brain, which makes you feel better, improves mood, cognition and brain functioning.

B vitamins in walnuts provide energy by breaking down carbohydrates into glucose. They also are necessary for every cell in your body. They also assist in nor-

mal functioning of the nervous system, improving muscle tone in the stomach and intestinal tract, and promoting healthy skin, hair and eyes. Since B vitamins are not stored in your body, you must replenish them frequently.

Vitamin E, a powerful antioxidant in walnuts, counters the negative effects of dangerous free radicals and offers protection against cardiovascular disease and some cancers.

There's even melatonin in walnuts. And melatonin, besides helping provide a good night's sleep so necessary for a healthy body, is a powerful antioxidant that offers further protection against aging and age-related diseases.

All in all, walnuts pack a powerful fat burning punch!

How To Prepare Walnuts

When you shop for walnuts, remember that they are perishable and will spoil rather quickly. Make sure you store unshelled walnuts in a cool, dry place away from direct light. In the shells, they should last for six months. Shelled walnuts that you buy in a package will last about four months. Once you open them, however, place them in an airtight container and keep in the refrigerator. You may also store walnuts in the freezer for up to one year.

Invest in an inexpensive nutcracker to enjoy shelling your own walnuts. This is a great way for children to get into the act. They love to crack walnuts.

You can chop walnuts to add to salads, put in dips, or use with whole grain breads or cereals. Add some to your own granola concoction. Walnuts eaten alone are a tasty and satisfying treat.

Sauté some vegetables and add chopped walnuts. Put some taste into your yogurt with a topping of walnuts and honey or maple syrup.

Try walnut pancakes, muffins with apple and walnuts, walnut and zucchini bread.

Walnuts can be added to numerous desserts. Just don't eat too many. They're very tempting!

How Much To Eat

Average serving size is about 12-15 per day.

Olives And Olive Oil

Olives

Olives come from an evergreen shrub or tree that's native to Asia, the Mediterranean and parts of Africa. The fruit (olive) is a small drupe that is ovoid in shape. There are hundreds of varieties of olives but two basic kinds: green and black. The difference between them comes from the methods utilized in processing.

Did you know that freshly picked olives are inedible due to their profound bitterness? They become edible only after a three-step process: alkaline solution treatment, washing and addition of brine. Olives become black after they have been saturated with an oxygen solution.

Black olives taste rich and have a well-defined aroma. Because of this, they can be served without a filling. Green olives, on the other hand, can be eaten as an appetizer.

Black and green olives are available year-round in supermarkets and grocery stores, specialty markets and whole or natural foods stores.

Olive Oil

Olive oil, which comes from the olive itself, is classified according to the production method as well as the quality of the oil. There are pure (some processing, filtering and refining), extra light (considerable processing, very mild olive flavor), virgin olive oil (from the second pressing), and extra virgin olive oil (from the first cold pressing of the olive). Of these, extra virgin olive oil is the highest quality and comes from the very first cold pressing of the high-grade Spanish olive. Extra virgin olive oil, being cold-pressed, is not subjected to heat during production and retains the full taste and nutrient benefits of the olive. Extra virgin olive oil has a light, natural (but perhaps a bit bitter) taste.

Natural olive oil is actually a mixture of refined and extra virgin olive oils. It is heat processed, but with the unique technology used, it allows the full taste of the olives to come through minus the bitterness. Its taste is light and gentle.

Olive oil is available year-round in supermarkets, grocery stores, specialty markets and whole foods markets.

Olives And Olive Oil's Fat Fighting Benefits

When you consider olives and the olive oil that comes from them, think about the numerous health benefits they offer you, particularly concerning your fat-burning diet. They are light in calories and have no cholesterol but satisfy your desire for food with less consumption. Because you feel fuller when you eat olives or have olive oil in your meal, you'll wind up consuming fewer overall mealtime calories.

According to the Mayo Clinic, cooking with olive oil is a healthy choice. Olives and olive oil are rich in vitamins and minerals and monounsaturated fats. Brimming with nutritional value, olives and olive oil are also rich in antioxidants, which offer protection against dangerous free radicals, help protect against cardiovascular disease and diminish cancer risk.

Olives and olive oil provide a tremendous aid to the functioning of the digestive system, and prevents gastric ulcer disease, gallstones and also is a natural remedy against constipation. This helps you process your food faster and speeds elimination of toxins from your body.

Metabolism in the body gets a boost from consumption of olives and olive oil. You need the balanced fat in olives and olive oil as an energy source. In addition, bone and body growth and development are augmented.

Vitamin E, a powerful fat-soluble antioxidant in olives and olive oil, helps prevent aging, gives skin a youthful appearance, strengthens the body's immune system, protects blood cells and the nervous and skeletal system, as well as the eyes' retinas, from free radical damage. Vitamin E also reduces the severity of rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis, and asthma.

The olive's juice, and olive oil, helps to reduce cholesterol. The oils from the olive prevent cholesterol from sticking to artery walls, offering protection against heart attack and stroke. These oils also keep blood sugar in check and provide protection against diabetes.

Polyphenols in olives and olive oil have quite significant anti-inflammatory properties.

How To Prepare Olives And Olive Oil

For eating olives, two things to be sure to check out are the olives' expiration date and caliber. Expiration date is obvious, but caliber refers to the size of the olives. It will be shown as two numbers, like this: 240/260, 280/430, 180/220. What do these mean? They are the minimum and maximum number of dry olives in a 1 kg bunch. Larger olives have the smaller of these two numbers. In the examples listed here, the ones that have 180/220 refer to extra large or super olives.

Olives in glass containers will last for 3 years. Olives in tins will last 2 years. Once you open a container, either glass or tin, the olives will last several weeks before spoiling, but only if kept in a container that is non-metallic.

Olive oil should be stored in the glass container it comes in, and kept in a closed cupboard away from heat, light and moisture. It will keep for up to 18 months.

Olive oil can be used a number of ways in daily cooking. There are spreads and appetizers, soups, salads, main courses, baking and desserts. Tuscan cooking uses olive oil extensively. Try these delicious dishes: zuppa di fagioli (bean soup), ribolitta (leftover soup), a vegetable and chick pea soup from Umbria. Substitute olive oil in your favorite recipe. Make sure to use extra virgin olive oil for the maximum nutritional value. Use olive oil as a salad dressing for a delicious and nutritious taste treat.

How Much To Eat

For salad dressing, use about 1-2 tablespoons, depending on serving size. For recipes, use your guide as to how many you're cooking for. Many recipes call for

different amounts of olive oil, from 4 ounces, to 1-1/2 cups, 10 tablespoons or 1/2 cup. For individual use, aim for 1 tablespoon per day.

When eating olives, remember they can contain a high salt content. So, while they're low on calories and cholesterol, keep the number you eat down to minimize salt intake, especially if you have high blood pressure. A standard serving size is about 4-5 olives. Again, this depends on the size of the olives. If you're eating jumbos, eat about 2.

Seeds

Seeds are an all important part of your fat-burning diet. There are two other seeds to add to this category, flax seeds and sesame seeds, but they are covered under their own names due to the combination with flaxseed oil and sesame seed oil.

Hemp Seeds, Nuts, Oil And Powder

There has been an increasing trend toward use of hemp products – hemp seeds, nuts, oil and powder – in recent years. These products now grace both grocery as well as health food stores for good reason: they're good for your health!

What is hemp and where does it come from? Hemp comes from the hemp nut, which is mostly oil. Organic hemp powder is popular with athletes and body-builders due to its protein content that assists with muscle building and energy production.

The green color of hemp products comes from its chlorophyll content. Hemp seeds have a nutty, delicious taste that has been described as rich. Some describe the flavor as a cross between pine nuts and cashews. Hemp seed oil is among the lowest in saturated fats.

Hemp Seeds, Nuts, Oil and Powder's Fat Fighting Benefits

Hemp in all its food forms – seeds, nuts, oil and powder – offers tremendous nutritional value that includes complete protein and essential oils in just the right ratio for humans to consume. About 65% of the protein content of hemp seed can

be used by the body in its raw state. That means you can add hemp seeds to foods like salads without cooking it first. Of course, it's also great used in cooking (oil).

Chlorophyll in hemp seeds, nuts, oil and powder, which is responsible for its green color, contains many healing properties.

Omega 6 and omega 3 fatty acids ratio in hemp seeds, nuts, oil and powder is about 4:1. This ratio has been shown in studies to be beneficial to the body to help prevent heart disease and cancer.

Bodybuilders and athletes appreciate hemp powder for its energy boost and assistance with strengthening and building muscles. But you don't have to be a bodybuilder to benefit from the energy boost you get with hemp seeds, nuts, oil and powder. Go on and add these to your fat burning eating routine.

How To Prepare Hemp Seeds, Nuts, Oil And Powder

Hemp oil, which is cold-pressed, must be kept refrigerated to maintain maximum freshness. You don't want to use it for sautéing because heat destroys its nutrients. But hemp oil is great used on salads, sauces and smoothies. Try adding it by the tablespoonful.

Hemp seed, oil, nuts and powder does have a downside. It's quite expensive. That's because it has to be imported. This is due to the fact that it is related to cannabis, the key ingredient in marijuana. But there are more than 25,000 food, clothing and other products that are made from hemp itself – and they're not habit-forming (in the addictive drug sense, although you may find you really like the taste).

You can find some salad dressings that contain hemp (or make them yourself). There's also granola that has hemp in it. Try hummus made with hemp, broccoli with hemp oil and seeds added.

Shelled hemp seeds are great as snacks, for baking in cookies, muffins and breads, for adding to salads, soups and stews, sauces and various dips. Hemp seeds are best kept in a cool, dry place and after opening, keep in the refrigerator where they'll last several months.

Check it out and try some yourself. It's a great addition to your fat burning eating regime!

How Much To Eat

Average serving size is by the tablespoonful. For recipes, it varies from ¼ cup to a couple of tablespoons. Be guided by number of persons to serve. Two scoops of hemp powder (about 30 grams) has 115 calories, 2.8 grams of fat (0 trans fat, 0.4 grams saturated, 2.0 grams polyunsaturated, 1.5 grams Omega 6 and 0.5 grams of Omega 3 fatty acids, 0.4 grams monounsaturated fat), no cholesterol or sodium and 13.2 grams carbohydrate of which 53% is dietary fiber, and 11.2 grams of protein.

Pine Nuts

Although they are called pine nuts, they're actually seeds that various pine trees produce. The seeds are contained within the pine cones and are covered by a hard-type shell. Pine nuts are found in several varieties of pine trees, but usually the stone pine or umbrella pine. They are grown and harvested extensively in Southern Europe (Italy, France, Spain and Portugal) and in the Southern U.S.

Pine nuts are available year-round in supermarkets and grocery stores, whole foods and health food stores.

Pine Nuts' Fat Fighting Benefits

Pine nuts are actually higher in protein than many other nuts. They are also a rich source of the B Vitamin thiamin, as well as the minerals potassium and phosphorus.

Nuts, in general, and pine nuts in particular, are one of your best plant sources for protein. Rich in fiber and phytonutrients, pine nuts are also loaded with antioxidants, such as Vitamin E and selenium. Pine nuts do have some fat, but it's the good fat, monounsaturated fat, that is in omega 3 fatty acids.

Potassium in pine nuts helps to lower blood pressure, regulates fluid balance in the body, helps with rheumatic or arthritic conditions, alleviates pain, promotes

faster healing of wounds and bruises, and assists in numerous metabolic processes in your body.

Phosphorus in pine nuts works in conjunction with calcium to provide bone and teeth strength, density and proper development and growth. Phosphorus also helps eliminate waste from kidneys, provides energy and assists with building proteins necessary for reproduction. In addition, phosphorus helps metabolize protein, fat and carbohydrates.

Thiamin helps you release energy from carbohydrates, so it is a great boost to fat burning. Thiamin also helps to regulate your appetite, to stave off hunger pangs. And it is necessary for proper nervous system functioning and supports heart muscle health.

Omega 3 fatty acids in pine nuts may help to lower your LDL or bad cholesterol. This provides heart protection against cardiovascular disease.

Vitamin E in pine nuts, along with selenium, fights against the dangerous free radicals roaming in your body, and help to stave off heart attack, stroke, and various forms of cancer. Vitamin E protects the blood cells, the nervous system, your skeletal muscle and the retinas in your eyes. Selenium in pine nuts works right along with Vitamin E to preserve the elasticity of tissue, and it also assures proper protein utilization, and promotes healthy functioning of red and white blood cells.

Fiber in pine nuts helps you to feel full and satisfied while eating less. Fiber also helps with digestion, metabolizing fats, carbohydrates and protein and providing energy. Fiber bulks stools and eliminates toxins from your body.

How To Prepare Pine Nuts

Pine nuts are rather expensive, due to the fact that they are harvested by hand. You will find them shelled and raw in grocery stores and supermarkets, as well as whole foods and health food stores.

It's important to remember that pine nuts will go rancid quickly, so if you buy them in bulk quantities, make sure the vendor has a good turnover rate. You want

only the freshest pine nuts. Be sure the container is covered and inspect for any signs of insects, debris or moisture.

At home, store pine nuts in a tightly sealed container that you keep in the refrigerator. They'll stay fresh for about one month. You may also freeze pine nuts for a period of about three months.

Pine nuts can be used in tossed salads – either fruit, mixed green, or with chicken, salmon, turkey or tuna. Eat them raw or roasted.

Raw pine nuts are ground to make pesto.

Add pine nuts to your favorite savory dish, or include in stuffing. You can also find recipes that include pine nuts in cookies, breads and various delectable desserts.

To roast your pine nuts, place in an oven heated to 350° and roast until they turn a golden brown color.

How Much To Eat

Average serving size is about 10 pine nuts, which have about 10 calories.

Pumpkin Seeds

Pumpkin seeds are flat, dark green seeds that come from the inside of the pumpkin. Pumpkin seeds are also called pepitas. Some have a whitish-yellow husk, although some pumpkin varieties don't have shells at all.

Seeds from the pumpkin taste lightly sweet, chewy and nutty. Pumpkins (and pumpkin seeds) belong to the same vegetable family as squash, cantaloupe and cucumber. They all grow on vines, either trailing on fences and trellises, or staked and growing along the ground.

Although you mostly think of pumpkin at Halloween, and associate it with goblins and trick-or-treaters, pumpkin seeds are a universally good and healthy treat year-round.

Did you know that most of the commercial producers of pumpkins are located in the U.S., China, India and Mexico?

Pumpkin seeds can be prepared at home from whole pumpkins you buy at the grocery store or farmer's market. Pumpkin seeds are available year-round in commercial packages at all grocery stores and supermarkets, health and whole foods markets.

Pumpkin Seed's Fat Fighting Benefits

Pumpkin seeds have a ton of minerals, like magnesium, manganese, phosphorus and the amino acid tryptophan. They also contain good amounts of protein, copper, iron, Vitamin K and zinc.

Tryptophan in pumpkin seeds helps to relieve depression and helps improve mood. Tryptophan also helps you to feel fuller faster, so you don't eat as much.

The Omega 3 fatty acids in pumpkin seeds are currently being researched for their potential benefit to the prostate. Zinc in pumpkin seeds is also thought to positively impact prostate health. Zinc is proven to help prevent osteoporosis and to strengthen bone density, especially in men and women over 50.

Pumpkin seeds also provide an anti-inflammatory benefit that helps alleviate inflammation and may prevent arthritis.

The rich mineral content (magnesium, manganese, phosphorus) of pumpkin seeds helps to improve the functioning of the kidney and urinary tract and aids digestion, lowers blood pressure and cholesterol. Pumpkin seeds may also help to treat learning disorders and cognitive diseases, such as Alzheimer's.

How To Prepare Pumpkin Seeds

You can find pumpkin seeds in commercially available packages at grocery stores and supermarkets as well as in bulk at whole foods and some health food stores. If you buy them in bulk, make sure you purchase from a vendor that has a good turnover, to ensure maximum freshness. Also check to see that the container is covered and there's no evidence of moisture or insects and that they are whole

and not shriveled. If you can smell the pumpkin seeds, do so. You want to make sure they don't smell rusty or rancid. You can also prepare your own pumpkin seeds by roasting them from whole pumpkins you purchase during pumpkin harvest season – September-October.

When you get pumpkin seeds home (whether you bought them in a package or you roast them yourself), keep them in an airtight container that you refrigerate. They'll keep for a few months, but they're best eaten fresh or within 1-2 months at the most.

How do you make your own pumpkin seeds? It's easy. You first remove the seeds from a cut pumpkin and clean them off with a paper towel. That's to remove the mushy pulp from the inside walls of the pumpkin. Spread the wiped-off seeds on a paper bag and allow to dry overnight. After they are thoroughly dried, place them in a single layer on a cookie sheet and roast lightly at a temperature of about 160-175° oven for approximately 20 minutes. Roasting at a low temperature for a short period of time allows the pumpkin seeds to retain their healthy and nutritious oils.

For serving suggestions, there's always eating pumpkin seeds alone as a snack. But also try sprinkling pumpkin seeds on some sautéed vegetables, on top of salads (mixed green and fruit – experiment), put some on hot or cold cereal along with fresh fruit like blueberries or strawberries. Add some pumpkin seeds to granola and cookies, especially oatmeal raisin. A novel idea is to add pumpkin seeds to turkey burgers, but be sure to grind the seeds up first.

How Much To Eat

Average serving size of pumpkin seeds is 1/4 cup. That's about 34.50 grams, and includes 186.65 calories.

Sesame Seeds and Sesame Oil

Sesame oil, not surprisingly, comes from sesame seeds which are rather flat and oval seeds from an annual herb cultivated since ancient times in hot climates of India, Africa, Indonesia and Afghanistan. In the U.S., sesame seeds are cultivated

in Texas and Arizona, both of which have ideal growing conditions. The plant itself contains a hairy stalk from which flowers in shades of white, pink and purple bloom and then develops into horizontally stacked seed pods. The seeds have a hard shell that may be light tan, red, brown or black. When the seeds are hulled, the sesame seeds are white in color.

The flavor of sesame seeds – and sesame oil -- is very delicate, sweet and nutty. Sesame seeds and sesame oil can be purchased year-round at supermarkets and grocery stores, whole foods and health foods stores.

Sesame Seeds and Sesame Oil's Fat Fighting Benefits

Sesame seeds, which are 25% protein, are rich in methionine and tryptophan, essential amino acids that are usually lacking sufficient quantities in a lot of plant proteins. Sesame seeds and sesame oil are also low-fat and cholesterol-free. Sesame seeds and sesame oil contain powerful antioxidants such as Vitamin E, which helps to lower cholesterol and provided protection against free radical damage that could lead to heart attack and stroke.

Tryptophan is involved in the release of serotonin, which helps alleviate mood, contributes to a full feeling so that you don't overeat, and generally makes you feel good. Methionine helps your body break down fats, as well as prevent fat build-up in your arteries. Methionine helps with digestion and detoxifying the liver, as well as fighting off free radicals, helps with muscle building and can help treat symptoms of depression, arthritis and chronic liver disease.

Sesame seeds and sesame oil also contain the mineral magnesium, which helps regulate blood pressure, maintains bone strength and development, guards against abnormal heart rhythms and heart disease, prevents migraines, provides an energy boost and helps prevent diabetes.

Both sesame seeds and sesame oil contain calcium, phosphorus, potassium and zinc. Phosphorus, along with calcium, is essential for bone health. Phosphorus also helps regulate your body fluids and keep your kidneys healthy, assists with reproductive hormonal issues, including menopause, and helps regulate energy production. In addition to bone health, calcium helps you to keep weight off, pro-

protects your heart by helping muscles, especially heart muscles, to expand and contract, helps your nervous system regulate blood pressure. Calcium also alleviates PMS symptoms and provides protection against colon cancer.

Potassium helps regulate blood pressure, water balance and levels of acidity in the body and is involved with cellular structure. Zinc stimulates a healthy immune system, improves your sense of taste and smell, aids in wound healing and inflammation, is good for strengthening and development of bones and is required for normal DNA synthesis.

Copper, along with iron, in sesame seeds and sesame oil, is essential for many co-enzymatic functions. Copper is actually necessary in order for iron to work in the body. And iron transports oxygen from the lungs throughout the body. Copper is a strong antioxidant, helps nerve functioning, bone growth, and assists the body in creating energy. Iron, along with transporting oxygen, provides energy to the body. Without sufficient iron, you may experience fatigue, irritability and/or migraines.

B Vitamins, such as riboflavin, thiamine and niacin, in sesame seeds and sesame oil, help the body to metabolize carbohydrates, proteins and fats as well as provide needed energy. They help keep the nervous system healthy, aid in digestion, help improve skin, eyes and hair, and are necessary for proper cell formation. B Vitamins help keep your heart strong and overall help contribute to a healthy body.

How To Prepare Sesame Seeds And Sesame Oil

You can purchase sesame seeds in bulk at whole foods and health foods stores and at some specialty markets. Unhulled sesame seeds are usually found at the health foods store. Sesame oil is available at supermarkets and grocery stores, as well as health and whole foods stores. It comes in cold-pressed or Asian varieties. Cold-pressed sesame oil is somewhat bland in taste and has a golden color while Asian sesame oil, made from seeds that have been roasted, is a darker color and has rather intense flavor.

You'll find sesame seeds on many commercially available breads, rolls and muffins, as well as crackers and bread sticks.

It's best to keep the sesame seeds in the refrigerator to prevent rancidity. Sesame oil can be stored in its container in a cool, dark and dry place. Sesame oil will keep for a long period of time and most likely will not go rancid. Just to be safe, only purchase small quantities of sesame oil and use it within a couple of months.

The most popular dish using sesame seeds and sesame oil is Tahini. Many Middle Eastern recipes utilize tahini, including tahini falafel sauce, dipping sauces, salad dressings and other great-tasting dishes. Tahini is actually sesame seed paste and is made with about 2 tablespoons of sesame seeds, 1/2 teaspoon of sesame oil, 1/4 teaspoon of salt and 1/4 cup of water (lukewarm). The seeds are ground in a blender and then you add the salt and sesame oil, drizzling in the water as you blend. This will make about 1/2 cup of tahini, which should be stored if unused in the refrigerator.

You can also try a sesame, spinach and artichoke dip, which uses tahini as one of the key ingredients.

Use sesame oil for cooking, but only add at the end so that it doesn't give off an unpleasant odor. Sesame oil gives a great taste to various sauces and stir-fry meals. Any kind of Asian food will do well with sesame oil. How about stir-fry fresh green beans with ginger and sesame oil? Delicious!

How Much To Eat

Depending on the recipe you're making, you'll use accordingly. Some recipes, like the one for Tahini, call for 2 tablespoons of sesame seeds and 1/2 teaspoon of sesame oil. This makes an amount equivalent to 1/2 cup of tahini. You'll find you usually need to add just a small amount of either the sesame seeds or the sesame oil – for great flavor and nutrition.

Sunflower Seeds

See the brightly colored sunflowers that grace the fields with their big, broad and yellow flowers with dark brown centers? These are the source of the delicious

sunflower seeds, which are green-gray or black in color and covered in shells that are the shape of a tear in gray or black. Sometimes the shells have stripes of black and white.

Sunflower seeds (that have been hulled) have a firm, although tender, texture and a nutty, mild taste. Did you know that Native Americans have eaten and used sunflower seeds for their oil, the flowers and seeds for decorations, religious ceremonies and dyes for more than 5,000 years?

Sunflower seeds are available year-round in supermarkets and grocery stores, and in whole and health foods markets.

Sunflower Seeds' Fat Fighting Benefits

Sunflower seeds are an excellent source of Vitamin E and a very good source of the B Vitamin, thiamin. They're also a good source of the minerals manganese, magnesium, copper, selenium and phosphorus, a good source of another B Vitamin, Pantothenic acid, and a good source of folate and tryptophan.

Vitamin E in sunflower seeds is a powerful anti-oxidant which may offer protection against dangerous roaming free radicals that cause heart disease, stroke and cancers, among other diseases.

Linoleic acid in sunflower seeds, an essential fatty acid, helps increase your body's metabolism to burn fat, assists with weight control, helps to maintain normal cholesterol and triglyceride levels as well as insulin levels. Linoleic acid in sunflower seeds also helps you to decrease dreaded abdominal fat and may help you increase muscle as you burn fat. It's a powerful weapon in your fat-burning regime.

Dietary fiber in sunflower seeds helps your digestion, bulks stools and speeds the removal of toxins from your body. It helps you feel full without eating so much.

The amino acid tryptophan, with its release of serotonin into the brain, helps you feel full as well as prevent overeating at subsequent meals. It also makes you feel good and can combat depression.

Magnesium in sunflower seeds helps to lower blood pressure, alleviates the symptoms of asthma, helps to ward off migraines and helps reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke. The mineral also helps in strengthening bones. Magnesium also helps your body metabolize carbohydrates, protein and fats and boosts energy production.

Copper in sunflower seeds helps with formation of elastin, in the formation of red blood cells and is essential in bone formation.

Phosphorus helps promote healthy bone development, working in conjunction with calcium. It's also essential for cell growth and cell repair.

Selenium in sunflower seeds, a powerful trace mineral, is essential to good health. Selenium helps with the synthesis of DNA repair and helps prevent cancer cell development.

The B Vitamins of thiamin and Pantothenic acid assist with energy production, the breakdown of fats and carbohydrates, which aids digestion, helps the nervous system function and strengthens the stomach wall muscles.

How To Prepare Sunflower Seeds

You can purchase sunflower seeds in two types: shelled or unshelled. Generally you can find them both in prepackaged containers in the markets as well as in bulk quantities. For bulk seeds, make sure the containers are covered, and inspect the seeds to detect any evidence of moisture, insects or shriveling. Also make sure the vendor has a good turnover of bulk items so that you wind up with really fresh seeds.

Avoid any seeds in commercially packaged containers that appear yellow or broken or dirty. They should look firm, and not limp. If they're yellow, they're probably rancid. Don't buy them.

Once you have the sunflower seeds at home, store them in an airtight container in the refrigerator. This is to protect them against rancidity, which tends to occur rather quickly when the seeds are exposed to air. They can also be stored in the freezer for several months.

For unshelled sunflower seeds you'll need a grinder or seed mill. You can also use your electric mixer to grind the seeds in a bowl. After you grind the seeds, dump them in cold water to separate the seeds from the shells. This may make sense if you grow your own sunflowers – I have a few planted in my garden – but there are so many sunflower seeds available commercially, it's easier just to buy them.

Recipe suggestions for sunflower seeds include sprinkling them on salads – green, mixed green, fruit salads and salads with chicken, turkey, tuna and vegetables. How about a scrambled egg breakfast that includes a few sunflower seeds for taste and nutrition?

Some inventive cooks decided to grind up sunflower seeds and use in place of (or add to) flour to dredge meats or chicken pieces.

Add a spoonful or so of sunflower seeds to your morning hot or cold cereal. Go on, enjoy!

How Much To Eat

Average serving size is about ¼ cup. That's 36 grams and includes about 105.20 calories.

Chapter 7

Fat Fighting Foods

HERBS AND SPICES

Apple Cider Vinegar

Apple cider vinegar, also known as cider vinegar, is made from cider or apple must. It is often sold unfiltered and has a brownish-yellow color. The actual process involves fermentation of apple juice to alcoholic apple cider, then allowing oxygen to interact with it to turn the alcoholic content into acetic acid. This is one of the ingredients in the finished product. Helping this process along is the “mother” (the spider web like bacterial foam that results during the fermentation process).

Commercially prepared apple cider vinegar is available year-round in supermarkets, grocery stores, and health and specialty stores.

Apple Cider Vinegar’s Fat Fighting Benefits

Apple cider vinegar is purely a wonderful addition to your fat burning eating arrangement. There’s just no debating this fact. Did you know that scientists have measured 90 different substances in apple cider vinegar? These include 13 types of carboxylic acids, four aldehydes, 20 ketones, 18 types of alcohols, eight ethyl acetates and many more. In addition, apple cider vinegar contains essential vitamins, minerals, trace elements, along with acetic, propionic, lactic, and amino acids, enzymes and roughage in potash and apple pectin.

What does all this mean in terms of health and Fat Fighting Benefits? Here are some of the main ones.

Apple cider vinegar speeds up metabolism. This is especially true when taken before meals. It is low salt, low sugar and low fat and helps in digestion as well as

metabolizing food to process fats and proteins. It aids the liver to detoxify the body and help digest fatty and greasy foods, as well metabolize proteins, fats and minerals. Apple cider vinegar also helps the body burn calories better. These are very powerful fat burning benefit.

Apple cider vinegar is a powerful detoxifying and purifying agent. It breaks down fatty, mucous and phlegm deposits all over the body. This detoxifying and purifying process benefits your overall health and functioning of specific areas of your body, including kidneys, bladder and liver. It does this by preventing excessively alkaline urine, and by oxidizing and thinning the blood. Thinning the blood helps prevent high blood pressure.

Detoxifying and purifying also prevent harmful bacteria from forming, keeping various infections and inflammation at bay. Apple cider vinegar can help heal sore throats and reduce nasal discharge. Potassium in apple cider vinegar is one of the chief reasons for this detoxifying and purifying action. When the body lacks certain minerals or salts, toxic buildup and poor health can result. These buildups can result in blisters, acne, boils and many other symptoms. Apple cider vinegar cleanses the body of these buildups and helps the blood clotting process as well as oxidizing the blood.

Potassium is critical for helping to regulate blood pressure and lower cholesterol, benefiting the heart. It is also essential for the body's ability to replace worn-out tissues. This is important in soft-tissue repair, just as calcium is for bones. Potassium also helps prevent hair loss.

The enzymes, as well as the potassium, in apple cider vinegar help provide more energy and vitality to the body. Hydrochloric acid and pepsin, an enzyme working in an acid environment, help break down food effectively and help with digestion. It also helps eliminate indigestion.

The malic acid and tartaric acid in apple cider vinegar help bring the body's acid content into balance at the same time they kill off bad bacteria in the digestive tract.

Apple cider vinegar is also antibacterial and anti-fungal, thereby protecting the body's immune system. A high potassium electrolyte balancer, apple cider vinegar helps re-mineralize the body and bring the blood's alkaline acid into balance.

Scientists and doctors believe that apple cider vinegar is also helpful for persons suffering from arthritis and osteoporosis, due to the fact that it breaks down calcium deposits in joints and strengthens bones. This is due to the magnesium, manganese, silicon and calcium content in apple cider vinegar.

Amino acids in apple cider vinegar act as antibiotics and antiseptics. The acetic acid in apple cider vinegar is able to form acetate compounds that help reduce toxicity in the body.

Apple cider vinegar is a powerful antioxidant that helps fight free radicals in the body. Free radicals are precursors to various diseases, including cancers and heart disease. The antioxidant properties of apple cider vinegar help it neutralize the free radicals that are formed in our bodies through oxidation.

Fiber in apple cider vinegar, which is water-soluble fiber from the pectin, helps soak up fats and cholesterol in the body that is then excreted. So, apple cider vinegar helps lower cholesterol. Fiber also helps prevent constipation and protects against diarrhea. The dietary fiber in apple cider vinegar helps control blood glucose levels, which is helpful for diabetics.

The antioxidants and beta carotene in apple cider vinegar combat eye diseases such as cataracts and macular degeneration.

How To Prepare Apple Cider Vinegar

Apple cider vinegar is used to prepare food, particularly in vegetables, pickling and salad dressings. It is also found as one of the ingredients in mustard, mayonnaise and ketchup. Apple cider vinegar may also be used as a condiment for vegetable-style chips.

Use apple cider vinegar in marinades and chutneys.

You will also find that apple cider vinegar can also be substituted in many recipes that call for lemon juice. This is especially true in some bread. The taste is not bitter, as you might think. On the contrary, the apple content makes the resulting recipe quite tasty. It's been well known for years that you can substitute apple-sauce for oil in baking with very good effects. It's the same principle with substituting apple cider vinegar for lemon juice, where appropriate. This just gives you another alternative, and a healthy one at that.

Here are just a few suggestions for using apple cider vinegar. Once you start actively looking for recipes, you'll find a whole lot more.

Baked tropical spareribs, barbecue spareribs, braised red cabbage, coleslaw, caramelized onions, sweet and sour chicken, chutney, marinades, salad dressings, pickling, tandoori chicken, soups, stews, baking. Of course in baking, most of the time you won't be using apple cider vinegar for delicate baked goods. Bread, however, is quite suited to use of apple cider vinegar.

How Much To Eat

General use is 1 tablespoon per serving. Most recipes call for about this amount, but be guided by the recipe. If you're adding to a drink for yourself, use 1 tablespoon.

Anise

Anise, also called aniseed and sweet cumin, is both a vegetable and an herb and comes from the same family as fennel, dill, caraway and cumin. Anise leaves, seeds and flowers are used for foods as well as various medicines.

The plant itself is tall with feathery green leaflets. Flowers are white and the fruit looks like ribbed seeds and is in fact often called a seed. The seeds are greenish brown or gray-green when ripe.

Anise has a flavor similar to that of fennel with a mild licorice taste.

Anise's Fat Fighting Benefits

The curative powers of anise have been utilized since the time of ancient Egyptians and Romans. Anise helps the body to digest foods and to metabolize fat. It is also chewed to sweeten breath after eating in the Middle East, India and some European countries.

A mild expectorant, anise is an ingredient often found in cough lozenges and syrups. It is also a diuretic, purging the system of toxins. In addition, anise has anti-septic and antispasmodic properties.

Anise contains volatile oils, including anethole, methylchavicol and terpenes, furanocumarins, flavonoids, phenylpropanoids, rutin and sterols.

The therapeutic properties of anise can also help restore equilibrium and relieve stress and tension.

How To Prepare Anise

Anise seeds are used extensively in certain types of cookies, like Italian biscotti or German springerle. They are also used in numerous breads and in sausage. Anise seeds are a seasoning for curry and hoisin and can be used to prepare herbal teas. The standard way to make an herbal infusion (herbal tea) is to pour one cup of boiling water over the material (anise) to be infused, let it stand for 5 minutes, strain and drink.

Anise seeds should be dried after harvesting and stored in a cool, dry place. You can buy anise seed in Indian spice stores and many supermarkets in the spice aisle.

Chinese recipes often call for anise seed, particularly in poultry dishes like chicken, and where ingredients need to be simmered for long periods. Chinese stocks and bases also contain anise seed. Star anise, a Chinese spice, is often substituted for anise. It is stronger than regular anise, so you only use 1/3 as much.

Anise oils are distilled into flavoring used in licorice candy.

How Much To Eat

The amount of anise seeds you use will depend on the recipe you want to make. Remember, a little goes a long way. The amount you use for herbal teas depends on what material you use. Consider the following as a guide:

For fresh plant materials, use ¼ cup.

Dried anise, use 2 tablespoons.

For bark or seeds, use 2 tablespoons of seeds or 1 tablespoon of bark.

Cayenne

Cayenne is a nutritional and medicinal herb. It's commonly referred to as chili pepper, red pepper or paprika. It is also a popular spice used in many different regional styles of cooking. Cayenne is a member of the capsicum genus, which includes bell pepper, paprika and green chilies.

It is one of the hundreds of varieties of chilies grown in Mexico.

Cayenne is available in the spice aisle of the supermarket.

Cayenne's Fat Fighting Benefits

The chemical compounds in cayenne work to increase the body's production of heat. This increases the rate of metabolizing fats and carbohydrates through stimulation of digestive enzymes. It also tones up the nervous system. Because of its heat, cayenne assists with perspiration to eliminate toxins during fevers and colds.

The Vitamin C and beta carotene in cayenne, both powerful antioxidants, help improve eyesight.

Research also shows that cayenne increases the production of epinephrine and norepinephrine which work in concert to decrease appetite. For maximum fat-burning benefits, add 6-10 grams of cayenne to a meal or up to 28 grams per day. This reduces hunger following meals and also reduces caloric intake during subsequent meals.

Historically, cayenne has been used as a medicinal herb to relieve such gastrointestinal problems as gas, cramping, stomachaches and other circulation-related symptoms. Today, many people take cayenne internally to help improve blood circulation. In fact, no other herb increases your body's blood flow faster than cayenne. Cayenne is the fastest blood circulation stimulant known and works within seconds.

Blood flow takes the herb's nutrition and healing properties directly to cells and also carries out and removes waste material from the body.

Application of cayenne externally to the skin helps relieve pain of rheumatoid arthritis.

Capsaicin, a resinous and pungent substance and cayenne's active ingredient, is believed to offer potential benefits to sufferers of fibromyalgia. New research points to hope for migraine sufferers when cayenne is applied as an ointment under the nose. Capsaicin in cayenne can also reduce platelet stickiness and acts as an antioxidant.

Some scientific findings suggest that cayenne reduces pain by destroying substance P, a chemical that carries pain messages to the brain.

Cayenne also has cardiovascular benefits and can help prevent ulcers.

How To Prepare Cayenne

Cayenne is a hot and spicy herb you can use to add zest to dishes popular around the globe. It is an acquired taste and tolerance due to its heat. Cayenne is a favorite ingredient in Cajun cooking, as well as the key spice ingredient in chile con carne recipes. As a spice, cayenne may be either cooked or eaten raw. Use dried cayenne pepper in powdered form, available in the spice aisle of the supermarket.

Sprinkle cayenne on corn or potatoes before roasting.

The spice is also a main ingredient in gravies, soups, seafood dishes, meats and goulash. You can also stir cayenne into juice, tea or milk.

Powdered spice labeled cayenne is usually made from dried, ground chili pepper pods and seeds. Some recipes for exotic dishes call for whole, fresh red peppers.

When you use whole, fresh red peppers, you can drop the entire pepper into the dish. If that's too hot, remove the seeds first. The seeds are where the heat comes from.

Use care when handling fresh chili peppers as the capsaicin in them can cause your skin to burn or sting. Since this can linger on your skin even after washing, use gloves when you cook with fresh chili peppers.

If you accidentally bite on a fresh pepper, ease the pain by biting into a piece of bread or some coconut or take a bit of salt.

How Much To Eat

The amount of cayenne you use will be dictated by the recipe you're using, as well as taste. Remember, a little cayenne is very potent. Don't exceed suggested amounts unless you have a great tolerance for heat.

Cinnamon

Cinnamon is one of the oldest spices known. It comes in quills, or strips of bark rolled together. The best varieties of strips are pale and like parchment. Cinnamon is also available ground as a powder.

There are many species of cinnamon but two main varieties are cassia (or Ceylon cinnamon) and true cinnamon (from Mexico).

The flavor of cinnamon is warm and aromatic with a fragrant, sweet bouquet.

Cinnamon is available year-round in the spice aisle of supermarkets.

Cinnamon's Fat Fighting Benefits

Cinnamon has unique healing abilities which come from three components in its bark's essential oils. These oils contain active components which are cinnamyl

acetate, cinnamyl alcohol, cinnamaldehyde and a wide range of other volatile substances.

The anti-clotting effect on blood platelets comes from the cinnamaldehyde component. This compound helps prevent unwanted clumping of blood platelets. Cinnamon's anti-inflammatory nature comes from its ability to release arachidonic acid from cell membranes. Thus, cinnamon helps to reduce inflammation in the body.

The essential oils in cinnamon also make it a potent anti-microbial food and has been studied for its ability to stop bacterial and fungal growth, including the common yeast infection *Candida*.

Of significant benefit to those who are conscious of fat burning foods, cinnamon may help persons with type 2 diabetes to improve their body's insulin response, normalizing blood sugar levels. Studies have shown that cinnamon's compounds stimulate insulin receptors as well as inhibit the enzyme that inactivates them. This significantly increases cells' ability to use glucose.

As an antioxidant, cinnamon is so powerful (compared to other antioxidant spices like anise, ginger, licorice, mint, nutmeg and vanilla), that it prevents oxidation more effectively than every other spice except mint.

Did you know that just sniffing cinnamon's aroma can help boost brain activity?

And cinnamon is also an excellent source of manganese as well as a very good source of iron, calcium and dietary fiber. Calcium and fiber help bind to bile salts and remove them from the body. Getting rid of the bile helps prevent damage from certain bile salts to colon cells. This, in turn, reduces the risk of colon cancer. Other studies show that cinnamon has an amazing ability to reduce leukemia and lymphoma cancer cells.

When bile is removed by fiber the human body breaks down cholesterol levels. This process helps lower high cholesterol and helps prevent atherosclerosis and heart disease. As little as 1/2 teaspoon of cinnamon each day may reduce blood

sugar, cholesterol and triglyceride levels by as much as 20% in type 2 diabetes patients who are not taking insulin.

How To Prepare Cinnamon

Cinnamon sticks are used to sweeten and flavor teas. Ground cinnamon can be used in many different recipes. Enjoy cinnamon toast. Drizzle flax seed oil onto whole grain toast and then sprinkle with a bit of honey and cinnamon.

You can also simmer cinnamon sticks with honey and soymilk.

Add ground cinnamon to black beans in nachos and burritos. Healthy lamb sautéed with eggplant and cinnamon sticks create a delicious meal with Middle Eastern flavor. Lamb tanginess and stuffed aubergines from North Africa utilize cinnamon as well.

Ground cinnamon added to curries is very popular.

Whole sticks or quills will keep their flavor for a long time. Ground or powdered cinnamon, however, loses its flavor quickly so only purchase small amounts and use quickly. Store amounts in airtight containers away from light.

When added to food, cinnamon inhibits bacterial growth and food spoilage. This makes cinnamon a natural food preservative.

Cinnamon is great in fruit dishes, breads, pancakes, muffins, pies, cookies and many more recipes.

How Much To Eat

Use of cinnamon depends on the recipe you're using. To obtain maximum Fat Fighting Benefits from cinnamon, use about 2 teaspoons per serving. This is easy enough to do when you sprinkle some on stone-ground oatmeal, for example.

Chives

Chives, which belong to the same family as onions, are an herb used extensively in cooking. And the bright green leaves of garlic chives are hollow and round, also

similar to those of onions, but much smaller. In June or July, flowering chives sport large round purple or pink flower heads. Yellow chives are simply garlic chives that are grown without sunlight.

All chives contain volatile, pungent oil comprised of sulfur compounds which accounts for their smell and taste that's quite distinctive.

Chives' Fat Fighting Benefits

Chives are fat-free, sodium-free, cholesterol-free and virtually calorie-free. The herb has high levels of Vitamins A and C, and the essential minerals of calcium, folic acid and potassium. They also provide mild antibiotic effects.

The choice of chives is excellent for those on restricted calorie, fat or salt intake diets.

Chopped chives sprinkled on food aids in digestion and also works to stimulate your digestive system. This is due to the sulphur-rich mustard oil in chives that also promotes the flow of blood. So, eating the right kinds of foods, accented with chives, can be beneficial to your fat burning arrangement.

Scientists know that chives have the capability to protect against salmonella and other food-borne illnesses. In fact, of the 38 strains of salmonella, chives seem to have the most potent effect of all the microbial foods, including mushrooms, according to scientific research now underway.

Chives are also high in dietary fiber, to speed away toxins from your body and keep you regular, along with helping to keep you feeling satisfied and full. They're also a good source of beta carotene and Vitamins B-1 and B-2.

How To Prepare Chives

Fresh chives are available in the produce section of supermarkets, specialty markets, health food stores and farmers markets. Dried chives are also available, but fresh are nutritionally much better for you.

Look for bright green and glossy leaves that are uniform in appearance. Avoid those that are drooping or brown. Store chives in a plastic bag in the refrigerator and use within one week to ensure maximum freshness.

When you're ready to use, rinse chives in cold running water. Then snip or chop them and toss into salads, soups, stews. Add to tofu, cheese spreads, omelets and scrambled eggs, baked or mashed potato (minus the butter, please, unless it's butter substitute or healthy olive oil).

If you use chives in cooking, add them toward the end of the cook time to keep them from losing flavor and turning bitter.

Add chopped chives to cucumber slices or sprinkle on top sliced fresh tomatoes.

Don't overlook chives as a decorative and healthful benefit to your soups and salads by simply laying some spears crosswise on top of a serving.

Use chives whenever you would normally use onions. Just be sure to add them at the last minute so you obtain their full flavor.

How Much To Eat

One tablespoon of chopped chives, per serving, is adequate. This is about three grams total.

Cloves

Cloves are an herb used as a spice as well as for medicinal purposes. They are actually the dried, immature and unopened buds of the tropical clove tree. Fresh cloves are pink. When they are dried, they turn a rust brown color. The four-pointed flower bud is the large end of the clove. The flavor of cloves is sweetly pungent, astringent and with very strong aroma.

Cloves and clove tea are safe to ingest. Cloves oil can be used as an oral antiseptic.

Cloves can be found dried in the spice aisle year-round and fresh when available in the produce section in supermarkets.

Cloves' Fat Fighting Benefits

Cloves are useful for combating problems in the intestines, according to recent scientific studies. An ingredient in cloves helps to control diarrhea. It fights the bacteria responsible for causing diarrhea. Clove tea is the best way to relieve indigestion as well as to control diarrhea. To stop vomiting, just use a few drops of clove oil.

In fact, cloves have been used since ancient times as an herbal and medicinal remedy for digestive ailments. Cloves help to relax the smooth muscle lining of the digestive tract. When the muscle lining is relaxed, it helps to curb diarrhea and to relieve indigestion.

Cloves also stimulate saliva and gastric juices, also improving digestion.

The ancients also used cloves to aid in respiratory problems. Today, scientists and herbalists know that essential oil of clove is very effective against streptococcus (strep throat), staphylococcus (staph) and pneumonococcus (pneumonia) infections. Herbalists also recommend clove oil as a treatment for toothaches.

In addition, cloves are thought to benefit those suffering from stomach ulcers and gas. This is due to their primary chemical ingredients that include tannins, eugenol and caryophyllene. These act as a powerful local antiseptic and mild anesthetic.

Cloves increase blood circulation and increase the body's temperature. The oils stimulate and disinfect as they travel throughout the body.

Japanese researchers have shown the antioxidant properties of cloves. Antioxidants guard against the cell damage known to cause cancer from roaming free radicals in the body. However, persons suffering from cancer should not take large amounts of cloves. Those who have no incidence of cancer can safely consume cloves.

Besides its antioxidant, antiseptic and anesthetic properties, cloves are also thought by many to be an aphrodisiac!

Whether this is true or not, clove oils do contain the previously mentioned eugenol and tannins as well as acetyleneugenol, methylsalicylate, pinene, gallic acid and vanillin.

How To Prepare Cloves

Cloves are strong herbs and can overpower a dish if too many are used. Powder quickly loses its flavor. Cloves are best purchased whole and ground fresh in a coffee grinder when you are ready to use. Store cloves in an airtight container that's kept out of direct light.

Whole cloves are often used with hams and pork. Stud onions with cloves for use in recipes that call for cloves. These include certain boullions, stocks and soups.

Venison, wild game and boar (yes, boar!) are also enhanced with cloves. Cloves are also great in gravies and beef marinades. Just throw some cloves in at the last minute for maximum flavor.

And cloves are a key ingredient in mulling and pickling spices and Worcestershire sauce.

Spice up a cake with cloves, according to recipe instructions.

For indigestion or help with gastrointestinal problems, make some clove tea. Just use one teaspoon powdered cloves per cup of boiling water. Steep 10-20 minutes, strain and drink.

How Much To Eat

This depends on the recipe you're using and for how many persons. For clove tea, use 1 teaspoon per cup of boiling water. For studding a ham, you'll want to arrange the cloves in a grid fashion all around the exposed surface of the ham. To add flavor to other teas or hot drinks, place 1-2 whole cloves in the bottom of the cup (be careful not to drink them).

Coriander

Coriander is an herb and a spice used in Asia and the Orient for thousands of years. It is actually a seed of a small plant from the parsley family. The seeds are almost spherical, with one end slightly pointed while the opposite end is slightly flat.

Coriander is also known as coriander leaves, and called cilantro in the U.S., dhania in India and also Chinese or Mexican parsley.

Whole and ground coriander is available. The plants and fresh leaves are called cilantro, used as an herb. Look for whole and ground coriander dried in the spice aisle and cilantro or fresh coriander in the produce section.

The flavor of coriander seeds is warm, mild and sweet – similar to a blend of lemon and sage.

Coriander's Fat Fighting Benefits

Coriander is a very good source of dietary fiber which helps to bulk stools and speed away toxins from the system. Fiber helps you to feel satisfied and full faster without consuming too much. Coriander is also a good source for magnesium, iron and manganese.

Research suggests many healing and Fat Fighting Benefits from coriander. These include its healing ability with inflammation, stimulating insulin production and lowering blood sugar, lowering bad cholesterol while increasing good cholesterol, combating dangerous free radicals in the body, and coriander's strong antimicrobial properties.

Coriander relieves indigestion, cramps, gas and when used topically it relieves rheumatic pain and acts as an antimicrobial.

Volatile oils in coriander contribute to its Fat Fighting Benefits. These oils contain beneficial phytonutrients such as carvone, borneol, camphor, linalool, elemol, limolene and geraniol. Flavonoids in coriander include kaempferol, quercetin,

rhamnetin and epigenin. There's also the phenolic compounds of caffeic and chlorogenic acid.

Coriander and cumin seeds are used as a diuretic in India. The two extracts are boiled, then cooled and consumed as a drink.

A compound called dodecanal in coriander is very potent in killing the salmonella bacteria, according to University of California, Berkeley, researchers.

Coriander's essential oil delays e coli growth as well. This seems to suggest antibacterial applications for the herbs' use as well as its other Fat Fighting Benefits. Killing bacteria prevents infections from developing in wounds.

How To Prepare Coriander

Although coriander is from the same plant as cilantro, it is not interchangeable with cilantro. Use ground coriander in desserts and sweet pastries. It is also excellent in curries, root vegetable dishes, meat and seafood dishes such as those in South American, African, Indian and Mediterranean cuisine. Add coriander to any recipe that calls for ginger.

Add ground coriander to marinades and stews for Mediterranean flavor.

The most common use of coriander is in curry powder. And coriander seed is often used in place of caraway seed in rye bread.

Coriander is a key ingredient in many seasonings. In India, equal amounts of coriander seeds and cumin seeds are boiled together. Once cooled, the two extracts are consumed as a drink.

Roasted coriander seeds, called dhana dal in India, are eaten as a salad.

Store fresh coriander in an airtight container in the refrigerator – but first chop off the root. Leaves don't keep well, so eat them fairly quickly. When leaves are frozen or dried, the loss of flavor is noticeable.

Fresh leaves are essential to many Asian chutneys, Mexican guacamole and salsas and Vietnamese foods. Sometimes coriander is used in sushi rolls.

Heat diminishes the flavor of coriander leaves quickly, so they're often used raw or added to a dish just before serving.

Try sautéed fresh spinach, coriander, garlic and coriander seeds. Add garbanzo beans, ginger and cumin as additional spices for a tasty dish.

Add coriander seeds to soups and broths and to the poaching liquid for fish.

For a Middle Eastern flavor pancake or waffle, sprinkle a little ground coriander into the mix.

Heat vanilla soymilk, coriander, cinnamon and honey for a nutritious and tasty hot drink.

Put coriander seeds in a pepper mill that you keep on your dining table to enjoy with lots of different dishes.

How Much To Eat

This varies according to taste and recipe ingredients, but a good serving size is 2 teaspoons of coriander seeds.

Cumin

Cumin is a spice that comes from a small annual plant in the parsley family. Cumin seeds look like caraway seeds, oblong in shape, ridged and yellow-brown in color. Both cumin and caraway, along with parsley and dill, belong to the same plant family.

The flavor of cumin seed is distinctive: nutty and peppery. Both whole and ground cumin are available year-round in the spice aisle of the supermarket or grocery store.

Cumin's Fat Fighting Benefits

Cumin stimulates the digestion, ensuring adequate production of energy and metabolizing fats.

Cumin, rich in iron, is excellent for energy and a healthy immune system. Iron is a mineral that is an integral component of hemoglobin, whose essential function is transporting oxygen from the lungs to all the body's cells. Iron is also a key enzyme for systems that produce energy and metabolize fat. Iron is particularly important for menstruating women, due to the loss of blood each month which may contribute to anemia. Adolescents and growing children also need iron, as well as pregnant or lactating women.

Carpal tunnel syndrome, nausea and morning sickness are also helped by cumin's healing properties.

Cumin helps with digestion since it secretes various enzymes in the pancreas that then help with digesting food and assimilation of nutrients. There's ample evidence linking cumin with protection against various cancers.

Seeds from cumin have anti-carcinogenic properties. Various tests show protection from tumors of the stomach and liver in laboratory animals. Scientists believe this protective effect may be due to cumin's powerful antioxidant capabilities in destroying free radicals. Cumin also enhances the liver's detoxifying function.

Cumin, like coriander, is a very good source of iron, a mineral that's essential for overall health.

How To Prepare Cumin

Cumin seeds should be lightly roasted before you use them whole. Or, grind them to bring out their aroma. Add cumin to other spices and pound together in a curry powder.

Ground cumin must be stored in an airtight container to retain its pungent flavor.

Use sparingly! It can quickly overpower a dish if you use too much. Less than one teaspoon is enough for a meal serving four persons.

Cumin is used for highly spiced foods. It is prominent in Indian, Eastern, Mexican, Portuguese, Spanish and Middle Eastern cuisine.

Besides its use as a key ingredient in most curry powders, cumin is also great in spicy meat, barbecue marinades and sauces, stews and mixed grills, particularly chicken and lamb.

Cumin gives a welcome bite to plain rice, cakes and beans, especially kidney bean dishes. Spicy Mexican foods like chile con carne and enchiladas with chili sauce use cumin for flavoring. Cumin is also used as a pickling ingredient in sauerkraut and cabbage and used in chutneys.

In the Middle East, cumin is added to fish, grills and stews, along with its use as flavoring for semolina or couscous steamed over vegetables and meat.

Try ground cumin added to tangy lemon or lime-based marinades you use on chicken, turkey, lamb or pork.

Heat garlic and cumin in olive oil to drizzle over cooked vegetables for a tasty treat.

How Much To Eat

Most recipes call for 1 tablespoon of ground cumin. Check recipe and be guided accordingly.

Dill

Dill is an herb that comes from the same family as parsley and coriander. Its leaves and seeds are used for seasoning.

The leaves of dill are green and wispy, fern-like in nature. Their taste is soft and sweet. Dried dill seeds are light brown and oval shaped with a taste similar to caraway seeds – sweet, citrusy and slightly bitter.

Fresh dill is available during summer and early fall in the produce section of the supermarket or grocery store. Dried dill seed is located in the market's spice aisle and is available year-round.

Dill's Fat Fighting Benefits

The nutritional and Fat Fighting Benefits of dill center around two healing compounds it contains – flavonoids, like vicenin and kaempferol, and monoterpenes (carvone, limonene and anethofuron).

The enzyme glutathione s-transferase is extracted by dill's monoterpenes. The enzyme helps anchor glutathione, an antioxidant molecule, to oxidized molecules in the body that would otherwise cause damage.

Dill's volatile oils help to neutralize certain carcinogenic substances such as benzo(a)pyrenes emitted in cigarette, charcoal grills and trash incinerator smoke.

The anti-bacterial nature of dill, like garlic, is due to its volatile oils.

Dill is a very good source of calcium, which helps to protect and strengthen bones. It also aids in rheumatoid arthritis.

Dill is also a good source of dietary fiber and the minerals iron, magnesium and manganese. Fiber in dill helps bulk up stools and speeds away toxins from the body.

Since dill is rich in mineral salts, it's very useful for enhancing flavor in salt-free or salt-restricted diets.

Dill's volatile oil also exerts a calming effect on the body's digestive system, since it relaxes the smooth muscles. Carvone, one of the oil's components, calms the stomach and relieves gas in the intestines.

The herb is also rich in Vitamin C and flavonoids along with the minerals that include calcium. One tablespoon of dill seed has as much calcium as 1/3 cup of milk.

How To Prepare Dill

Dill's light flavor and great taste make it a wonderful addition to many dishes. Some people love its tang, while others find it distasteful. It does have a fresh taste that enhances even delicate foods like eggs and omelets without overpowering them.

The herb is particularly good with seafood such as sea bass, trout, scallops or salmon.

Chop dill and add to yogurt. Dill is classically used with cucumbers to make dill pickles. You can also prepare dill-flavored cucumbers with a bit of white wine vinegar, fresh dill, sliced cucumbers and onions and a dash of sugar and chill in the refrigerator overnight.

Season many dishes with a little fresh dill and see what a difference it makes! Sprinkle fresh dill on mashed sweet potato for a great taste!

Steamed salmon with asparagus and dill sauce is one terrific recipe suggestion. Dill complements salmon and gives the dish a light and refreshing taste – great for spring and summer months when you want to eat nutritious and light.

Buy fresh dill and store in the refrigerator in a plastic bag. Don't keep it too cold, however. Make sure the leaves are smooth and a rich green when you buy them. Use within a day or two to ensure maximum freshness. Dried dill can be used anytime.

How Much To Eat

One tablespoon is sufficient per serving size. Of course, consult your recipe and adjust accordingly for the number of persons you intend to feed.

Dried Mustard (Seed And Powder)

Whole mustard seeds and dried mustard are herbs used as spices and seasoning. Seeds come in various colors but are typically brown and yellow. They have varying degrees of intense flavor or heat.

Prepared mustard is a condiment made from ground or powdered seeds of the mustard plant.

Whole mustard seeds are available at Indian spice shops or in spice and gourmet shops. Dry mustard powder is available year-round in the supermarket's spice aisle.

Dried Mustard's Fat Fighting Benefits

Mustard seeds are a very good source of selenium, a nutrient which helps reduce asthma severity and symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis and helps prevent ulcers.

Magnesium in mustard seeds also helps reduce asthma severity, lowers high blood pressure, reduces the instances of migraine attacks, and helps to normalize disrupted sleep patterns in menopausal women. The mineral also helps prevent heart attacks in patients with atherosclerosis or diabetic heart disease.

In addition, mustard seeds contain good amounts of iron, zinc, manganese, calcium, protein, niacin and dietary fiber. Mustard seeds are a very good source of omega-3 fatty acids, which have many fat-fighting properties.

Mustard seeds contain abundant amounts of phytonutrients called glucosinolates. They also contain myrosinase enzymes that work to break up the glucosinolates into yet other phytonutrients called isothiocyanates. These isothiocyanates have been extensively studied for their anti-cancer properties.

How To Prepare Dried Mustard

Whole mustard seeds have a hot, pungent flavor. You'll usually find yellow mustard seed used in American and European kitchens. They are often ground and made into prepared mustard, which is used in many different dishes for its bite – like hot dogs, hamburgers (try turkey burgers or turkey hot dogs instead). Ground dried mustard powder is added to stews and soups.

Indian cooks prefer brown or black mustard seeds. These are smaller than the yellow seeds most Americans use and are more pungent. Crushed mustard seeds can be sautéed in olive oil. This makes them sweet and mild.

If your recipe simply calls for mustard, chances are that it means prepared mustard. If the recipe calls for dried mustard or mustard seed powder, it will specify the type.

You can add the powder to vinaigrettes or in crab cakes. Try mustard in your many barbecue sauce recipes.

How Much To Eat

Use 1/2 teaspoon to 1 teaspoon mustard seeds or ground mustard powder, according to recipe direction. Be sure to clarify whether the recipe calls for prepared mustard, mustard seed or powdered mustard.

Fennel Seed

Fennel seed comes from the plant fennel, a member of the parsley family. The plant is used as a vegetable while the seeds are used as an herb.

Fennel seed is oval with green or yellow-brown dried fruit (seed).

The taste of fennel seed is somewhat like that of anise – licorice-like – but more aromatic, sweeter and less pungent.

Fennel seed is available in the supermarket spice aisle year-round.

Fennel Seed's Fat Fighting Benefits

The major chemical compound in fennel seed, terpenoid anethole, is believed to be responsible for its ability to prevent spasms in the smooth muscles of the intestinal tract. This helps fennel seed to relieve gas and cramping in the intestines.

Fennel seeds are rich in minerals, including magnesium. Fennel increases bile production and may also possess pain reducing, anti-microbial and diuretic properties.

You will often see a bowl of fennel seeds on a table by the door in Indian restaurants. Why? Herbalists suggest this is because fennel seeds aid digestion and help relieve gas.

The anethole in fennel seeds also helps reduce inflammation and prevents the occurrence of cancer. The oil also protects the liver from toxins.

European research indicates that fennel seeds also kill some bacteria, thus offering protective benefits to persons suffering from diarrhea.

The herb also has an effect of stimulating menstruation. This is due to the mild estrogenic effect of the fennel plant.

How To Prepare Fennel Seed

Fennel has a flavor similar to anise. It goes well with fish and is used to make curry powder, sauces and some Italian sausage.

Toast fennel seeds to bring out their flavor. Add fennel seeds to a meat loaf or meatballs for authentic Italian-inspired meals.

Fennel seed can be sautéed along with onion, sliced peppers and sausage to go along with pasta.

There's a wealth of recipes that use fennel seeds. Try potluck fisherman's stew, red hot chile with fennel seeds, swordfish with mushrooms and fennel seeds, tortellini with fennel seeds, calzone with fennel seeds added for flavor... And the list just goes on and on!

The yellow seeds are usually used in cooking while the green seeds are often eaten raw. Green seeds are softer and sweeter and much better for sweetening breath and acting as a digestive aid.

How Much To Eat

Use ¼ teaspoon to 1-1/2 teaspoonfuls, according to recipe instructions. If chewing fennel seeds to aid digestion, just chew a few.

Garlic

Garlic is a perennial, a member of the Amaryllis or lily family, which also includes shallots, leeks and onions. It is an underground bulb which has little bulblets, called cloves. The intense flavor of garlic is released when garlic cells are broken, causing a chemical reaction.

Its use in cooking and for its medicinal properties has been well documented throughout the ages, continuing today.

There are more than 300 varieties of garlic, the most common of which is the American garlic, mainly grown in California. It has white, paperish skin and strong flavor. Other varieties include the Mexican and Italian garlic, with pinkish-purple skins and slightly milder flavor.

Garlic's Fat Fighting Benefits

Scientists extol garlic's virtues as an effective antioxidant that promotes cardiovascular health, reduces bad cholesterol and acts as a good blood-thinning agent to prevent the formation of blood clots that could lead to a heart attack. Antioxidants help protect the body from the damage of roaming free radicals.

The two main ingredients in garlic that produce health benefits are the allicin and diallyl sulfides. The medicinal properties in garlic are strongest when it is used raw or finely minced or chopped.

Garlic contains good amounts of Vitamin B-6, Vitamin C, calcium, phosphorus and potassium. Vitamin C is a potent antioxidant that also stimulates your metabolism to burn fat. Potassium helps to regulate bodily fluids and maintain stable blood pressure. It can even prove effective in lowering high blood pressure.

Garlic helps you overcome fatigue, resist colds and flu, boosts your immune system, and prevents cancer.

The oils in garlic act as a natural diuretic that promotes vigorous peristalsis in the body. Peristalsis helps break down fat clumps and eliminate them from your system.

How To Prepare Garlic

Look for garlic with medium size bulbs and tight, firm heads. Avoid those that are soft or spongy – this means they're old. Also steer clear of those that seem too dry or brittle.

You can store unpeeled garlic away from heat and light for up to six months. But fresh garlic is better than garlic you've kept for months on end.

How can you tell California garlic from other varieties? If it has a stem, it's from California. The California garlic is also heavier than other varieties because it contains less water. Squeeze the bulb. The firmer it is the better.

Try poached garlic chicken. You can also bake garlic for a wonderful pate.

Add chopped garlic to almost any soup or stew. Garlic with steamed spinach tastes wonderful!

Of course, slivers of garlic are terrific in Mediterranean and Italian cuisine. Add garlic slivers to olive oil infusions for salad dressing.

You can sauté with garlic, oven roast, grill it, poach it or fry it. You can even rub raw garlic on the inside of the salad bowl to impart the flavor to the greens without actually having pieces of garlic in the greens.

Add garlic cloves to all sorts of roasted vegetables, meat, poultry and fish. It's so versatile and the healthful benefits are incomparable!

How Much To Eat

Do you love the taste of garlic in your Italian and Mediterranean food? If so, you'll likely want to use more than one clove per serving, like 2-3 cloves per person. Many recipes stipulate the amount of garlic cloves to use.

Ginger

Ginger, also called ginger root, is an herb used as a spice in cooking as well as a key ingredient in Ayurvedic and Chinese herbal medicine. Ginger is actually a rhizome or underground stem which comes from a perennial plant. There are dozens of different varieties of ginger, including

Whole Raw Root – This is what is often referred to as gresh ginger. There are Jamaican, African and Indian varieties with skin that ranges in color from pale white or buff skin all the way to dark brown. Fresh ginger obviously offers the freshest taste. Fresh ginger root can be found in Oriental markets. Dried roots are available whole or sliced.

Powdered Ginger – This is a spice made from ground root.

There are also crystallized ginger, pickled ginger and preserved or stem ginger.

The flavor of ginger is pungent with a fiery kick. The aroma is sweet, warm and pungent.

Ginger's Fat Fighting Benefits

The most commonly known use of ginger is for its aid to digestion. Ginger actually increases the body's production of saliva and digestive fluids. This process has therapeutic benefits that relieve indigestion, cramps, gas and diarrhea.

Ginger's primary constituents include gingerols, zingibain, oleoresins, bisabolol, starch and essential oils – camphene, borneol, cineol, zinziberene, along with protein and mucilage.

Nausea and morning sickness are effectively treated with ginger. Research further shows ginger to be more effective than Dramamine for relieve of motion sickness.

Ginger has anti-inflammatory properties that both relieve pain and lessen inflammation in conditions like muscle spasms, arthritis and rheumatism.

The therapeutic properties of ginger stimulate blood circulation and help remove toxins from the body. This cleanses the bowels and kidneys and helps nourish skin. Research on laboratory animals shows reduction in cancers as well.

The essential oils in ginger warm the body temperature which is useful to break fevers by increasing perspiration. Bronchitis, asthma and respiratory problems also respond well to ginger since it helps loosen phlegm and expel it from lungs.

Ginger also tones and gives a boost to the immune system. Ginger's strong antibiotic qualities can kill salmonella.

Of particular interest to your fat burning eating arrangement, ginger boosts weight loss by burning calories and forcing tissues to use more energy. Ginger also inhibits platelet aggregation. This may help persons suffering from arteriosclerosis or coronary artery disease.

How To Prepare Ginger

Ginger is a mainstay of traditional Asian cuisine, with its sweet but hot and tangy flavor. Fresh root ginger is available in supermarkets everywhere. Fresh is best to ensure robust flavor but ground ginger is also called for in many recipes, as in making curry paste.

When shopping for ginger, look for smooth-skinned roots with as few twists or joints as possible. Avoid wrinkled roots. This indicates they're old and the taste will be woody and unpleasant. Store fresh ginger in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

In Asian cooking, always use fresh ginger, which can be sliced, crushed or minced.

Fresh ginger is used in curry pastes, chutneys, pickles. Dried root is used to make curry powder.

You can slice young, tender ginger and toss in a green salad. The roots you're storing will occasionally grow sprouts. Add these to salads as well.

Dried ginger is called for in cakes, cookies, breads, biscuit recipes, like gingerbread and ginger snaps.

Ginger is great in puddings, preserves, jams and ginger tea, ginger beer and wine.

Satay dishes often have pickled ginger as an accompaniment. Ginger is also served as either a garnish or with sushi in Chinese cuisine.

Fresh ginger root added to butternut squash soup is just divine!

How Much To Eat

The amount you eat depends on the recipe. Follow instructions for ingredient and quantity size according to how many people you're cooking for. For adding to individual servings, $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon is a good rule of thumb. Again, it depends upon taste. If you love ginger, go ahead and eat more! It's great for you.

Parsley

Parsley is most likely the world's most popularly used herb. Parsley is used for both decorative as well as cooking uses. Parsley is a biennial plant that is a relative to celery. There are three types of parsley: curly, with clean fresh taste in tightly bunched, bright green leaves, flat-leafed or Italian parsley, with broad-leafed, sawtooth pattern and stronger flavor, and Hamburg or soup parsley, where the root (smaller than baby carrots) is the part used.

Parsley is available fresh (best for garnish and cooking) and dried (which can be rehydrated for use). Both fresh and dried are available year-round. Find fresh parsley in the produce section and dried in the spice aisle of the supermarket or grocery store.

Parsley's Fat Fighting Benefits

Parsley is rich in Vitamins A and C, both powerful antioxidants. It is also rich in the minerals iron, calcium and potassium, a good source of folate. Parsley is an excellent source of Vitamin K, beta carotene, lutein and zeaxanthin.

Parsley contains other components beneficial to health. These are its volatile oils and flavonoids. The volatile oils in parsley, specifically myristicin, have proven effective in preventing formation of lung tumors in animal studies. This effect is due to the volatile oil's ability to oxidize molecules from free radicals that would otherwise cause damage to the body. The chemoprotective action can help neutralize the effects of carcinogens like benzopyrenes in cigarette and charcoal grill smoke.

Vitamin C renders dangerous free radicals harmless as well. It is therefore an effective protective agent against atherosclerosis and colon cancer and numerous other diseases. Vitamin C also stimulates the production of energy and boosts metabolism of fats. Vitamin C also helps the body to absorb iron.

Flavonoids in parsley, especially luteolin, act as potent antioxidants in their own right. They help prevent free radical damage to cells and increase the blood's antioxidant capacity.

The diuretic properties of parsley help cleanse the kidneys and help improve kidney function. Parsley also settles the stomach and balances appetite.

How To Prepare Parsley

To obtain the maximum benefits from parsley, it's best to eat it raw. Chop and sprinkle over roast potatoes. Add to omelets, rice dishes, vegetables, green leafy salads and even fruit salads.

Parsley, along with thyme and bay leaves, is an essential ingredient in the flavoring many cooks use called bouquet garni.

Fines herbes, the French staple, is composed of parsley, tarragon, chives and chervil.

Chop and add parsley at the last minute (to maximize its freshness and flavor) to soups, stews and sauces.

Parsley is a great addition to broiled, grilled, baked or poached salmon – as well as any number of fish dishes. Flat or Italian parsley is used in French sauces and Milanese sauces served with lamb, beef, chicken or vegetables and spread over osso bucco just before serving.

Slice raw Hamburg parsley root and add to salads, stews, soups, gratins and vegetable purees.

Parsley juice is a great internal cleanser and very nutritious too!

How Much To Eat

Two tablespoons of fresh parsley is a good serving size. Of course, if you're following a recipe, be guided by the number of persons you're cooking for. Since parsley is so low in calories, feel free to eat it often!

Stevia

Stevia is a South American herb that has been used by Indians in Peru for hundreds of years as a natural sweetener as well as for its reputed medicinal proper-

ties. It is now widely available in the United States and is marketed as a dietary supplement.

Stevia comes from the leaves of a small, green stevia plant, actually a perennial shrub that's a distant relative to the aster. It has a delicious, refreshing taste that can be 30 times sweeter than that of sugar.

Stevia is found in many forms in most health-food stores (labeled dietary supplement), but cannot be called a sweetener, according to FDA rules.

Stevia's Fat Fighting Benefits

Stevia has no fat, no calories, no glycemic index and is 30 times sweeter-tasting than sugar. It also contains no carbohydrates and no chemical additives like you'd find in other artificial sweeteners.

There are more than 100 phytochemicals in Stevia, which is also rich in terpenes and flavonoids. One of eight plant chemicals called glycosides in Stevia is known as stevioside. This accounts for Stevia's extreme sweetness. Stevia's long list of phytochemicals reads like a dictionary, but the most recognizable ones include kaempferol, luteolin, quercetin, and caffeic acid.

Quercetin in Stevia serves an antioxidant as well as an anti-inflammatory and anti-histamine. Quercetin may help prevent cancer. It also helps relieve asthma and allergy symptoms and to reduce the pain from arthritis. In addition, quercetin can help combat fatigue, depression and anxiety.

The kaempferol in Stevia also serves as a powerful antioxidant. In the human body, antioxidants fight the damage done by free radicals, which can cause cancer and heart disease. Kaempferol, along with other antioxidants in Stevia, can help prevent free radical damage.

Stevia is safe for diabetics and those suffering from hypoglycemia.

Scientists have been conducting research on Stevia's health effects for quite some time. Most of this research was conducted on rat subjects and shows great promise in the following areas, which may be applicable to humans.

Stevia may help normalize blood pressure levels, as well as help to regulate heart functioning. Human tests show that using a hot water extract of Stevia leaf lowers blood pressure (systolic and diastolic).

Stevia has shown other benefits in the areas of its antibacterial, antiviral and antimicrobial properties. It may inhibit the streptococcus bacteria that form plaque on teeth. And Stevia may be beneficial in preventing skin diseases that insufficient blood circulation causes.

Still other studies purport Stevia's effectiveness in preventing infections.

How To Prepare Stevia

Use Stevia in place of sugar or other artificial sweeteners in your morning coffee, latte or teas. You can also use Stevia in baking, although you need to take into account the fact that it tastes 30 times sweeter than sugar, and adjustments need to be made.

Here's a general rule. For 1 teaspoon of sugar, use 1/2 packet of Stevia or 1/4 teaspoon Stevia powder. When the recipe calls for 1 tablespoon sugar, use 1-1/2-2 packets of Stevia or 3/4 teaspoon of Stevia powder. For 1 cup sugar, substitute 1-1/2 to 1 tablespoons of Stevia powder. For 2 cups sugar, use 3-5 tablespoons of Stevia powder.

As for how to use Stevia, just consider that if the recipe calls for sugar, you can substitute Stevia in one of its forms and be perfectly fine. You'll love the taste, and really benefit from the many healthful benefits.

How Much To Eat

Use according to taste (remember it's 30 times sweeter than sugar). For coffee, if you'd normally use one teaspoon, use a pinch of Stevia. For baking, adjust according to the parameters indicated in how to prepare.

Turmeric

Turmeric, also called curcumin, is an herb used as a spice in many Asian and Middle Eastern recipes. Turmeric powder is ground from the curcumin plant from the parsley family. The powdered spices give curry powder its deep yellow color.

Fresh turmeric is a fleshy rhizome that's smaller than ginger with a pleasing, delicate flavor. There are several kinds of turmeric ranging from those with bright, orange-colored flesh, to white. The deep orange color of curcumin in turmeric is what yields the rich yellow in soups, stews, curries and rice dishes. The distinct taste is earthy, like a gingered pepper.

Turmeric is often substituted for the more expensive saffron.

Powdered turmeric is available year-round in the supermarket's spice aisle. Fresh turmeric rhizomes may be found in some grocery stores and usually is available in specialty Asian markets.

Turmeric's Fat Fighting Benefits

Turmeric is a nutritional and fat burning powerhouse. It contains excellent amounts of manganese and iron and good amounts of Vitamin B-6, potassium and dietary fiber. Manganese and potassium help to lower cholesterol and high blood pressure, and regulate body fluids. Potassium helps metabolize blood sugar and boosts energy production.

Iron is necessary for all parts of the human body and is the key ingredient in hemoglobin, which carries oxygen throughout the body. Iron is necessary for brain development and function, body temperature regulation, metabolizing muscle activity, protection of the immune system and many other benefits.

Dietary fiber helps bulk stools and speeds away toxins from the body. Fiber makes you feel satisfied and full without consuming too much.

Turmeric's key ingredient is curcumin – this is what gives turmeric its rich, deep yellow color as well as its many health benefits.

Curcumin's anti-inflammatory properties have long been used in Chinese and Ayurvedia medicines to treat gas, jaundice, blood in urine, hemorrhage, bruises, chest pains, colic, toothache and menstrual problems. And that's just some of the conditions.

What is it in turmeric that accounts for these healthy properties? According to massive amounts of research and scientific studies, the yellow-orange pigment in turmeric, the curcumin mentioned above, is the primary anti-inflammatory agent. In fact, curcumin's anti-inflammatory, antioxidant and cancer-preventing properties are way off the chart. Curcumin's anti-inflammatory effects are comparable to potent prescription drugs as well as over-the-counter medications. Yet they have no toxic effects!

Scientists have shown that curcumin may offer treatment for inflammatory bowel disease, ulcers, Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

The antioxidants in curcumin are able to metabolize free radicals before they are able to cause damage to cells. Free radical damage is very evident in many diseases such as arthritis. Many persons suffering from arthritis report they feel great relief when they use turmeric frequently in their food preparation. The improvement includes reduced swelling of joints, morning stiffness that goes away quicker and greater ability to walk for more lengthy periods.

An animal study reported in Science in 2004 suggests that curcumin may be able to correct a genetic defect that's largely responsible for cystic fibrosis, a fatal lung disease characterized by thick mucus that causes life-threatening infection. Mucus further damages pancreatic functions and interferes with the body's digestion and absorption of nutrients.

The antioxidant characteristics of curcumin enable the colon to protect itself against free radical damage that may damage the cell's DNA composition and result in colon cancer. Curcumin helps destroy mutated cancer cells and prevents their spread throughout the body. Curcumin also enhances the functioning of the liver.

Further studies link frequent use of turmeric to lower rates of other types of cancer, including breast, lung, prostate and colon as well as prevention of tumor formation. Research conducted by scientists at the University of Texas indicates that curcumin can slow breast cancer cells in mice even when such cancer is already present.

The phytonutrients of curcumin in turmeric and quercetin (an antioxidant in onions), when used together in recipes, have been shown to reduce precancerous lesions in the human intestinal tract. This reduction includes both the numbers of lesions and size.

Curcumin in turmeric along with phenethyl isothiocyanates, phytochemicals that are abundantly found in cruciferous vegetables (Brussels sprouts, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, turnips, kale and kohlrabi), greatly limit the growth of cancerous prostate cells in humans. They even prevent the spread of existing prostate cancer!

As if this isn't enough, new research indicates that consuming foods containing the spice turmeric can reduce risk of developing childhood leukemia.

Turmeric helps with your fat burning lifestyle by increasing your body's detoxifying abilities in addition to its life-saving and healthy anti-oxidant properties.

Curcumin in turmeric is likely able to prevent cholesterol oxidation in the body, thus preventing the build-up of plaques that can lead to heart attack or stroke as well as reduce worsening of atherosclerosis and instances of diabetic heart disease.

There's also growing support for turmeric's protective capabilities against Alzheimer's disease.

How To Prepare Turmeric

Fresh turmeric is hard to find, but ground turmeric is available almost everywhere in the spice aisle of the supermarket or grocery store. Check out specialty ethnic and spice stores, however. You may be able to find fresh turmeric. Of

course, organically grown turmeric is the best. Don't be guided by the color, since color varies widely among the different varieties of turmeric.

Store turmeric (ground or powdered) in a tightly sealed container. Keep in a cool, dry place away from direct light. If you have fresh turmeric rhizomes, keep them in the refrigerator.

When using the spice, be careful of getting any on your hands or clothes, since the deep yellow color easily stains.

Here are some serving suggestions. Keep in mind that the flavor is intense, so use in small amounts. Try turmeric in chicken, eggs and egg salads, curries and tomato sauces, and seafood and pasta dishes. Turmeric in fat-free sour cream with cold cooked shellfish is delicious. You'll find that turmeric is often in mustards and pickles.

Add turmeric to salad dressings. The bright yellow color adds a rich look and great taste!

Turmeric goes well in marinades, savory breads and relishes. Try some on beans and winter squash as well as lentils.

Thai cooking uses turmeric extensively in stir fry, snacks, desserts, curries and soups.

You can even make a green tea spiced with turmeric to give yourself additional nutrition and cancer-preventing benefits.

Add turmeric to steamed or gently braised tofu. Sprinkle the spice liberally on many different dishes, both for the vibrant color it imparts as well as the fat burning and healthful benefits.

How Much To Eat

Use about 2 teaspoons per serving or as the recipe directs.

Chapter 8

Fat Fighting Foods

FOOD COMBINATIONS

Food Combinations

This section is completely optional, as you can lose weight simply by eating the Fat Fighting Foods and cutting out junk foods. I've created this chapter for people who want to try an exciting way to combine foods to burn extra fat. The ideas are a little unusual, but they work very well and speed up weight loss. If you're not interested in combining foods for maximum fat loss, you will still lose weight with the Fat Fighting Foods.

Okay, by now we have identified five Fat Fighting Food Groups:

Fruit Food Group – this includes all the delicious fruits you read about in the Fruits Chapter.

Protein Food Group – this includes all the vegetarian proteins such as beans and tofu, and the meat, fish, eggs, cheese and dairy products listed in the Protein Chapter.

Carbohydrate Food Group – includes the foods listed in our carbohydrate section such as millet, oats, durum wheat pasta, basmati, brown and wild rice, quinoa, spelt, and whole grain breads.

Fats Food Group – no, this isn't chocolate! This food group contains avocado; oils such as canola, coconut, flaxseed, olive and sesame; nuts such as almonds, Brazil nuts, macadamia nuts, and walnuts; seeds such as hemp, flax, pine nuts, sesame and sunflower, and finally, olives.

Vegetable Food Group – includes all the vegetables mentioned in the Vegetable Chapter.

If you eat these foods instead of the foods you eat on a regular basis, you will notice a gradual weight loss over time. The amount you can lose with the Fat Fighting Foods will vary, depending on how much weight you have to lose, and how you decide to combine your foods.

Combining your foods with the Fat Fighting Food Combinations will make them are easy for your body to digest, transform into energy and fight fat.

What Are The Fat Fighting Food Combinations?

You'll be happy to learn that you already know what they are. I've structured this book so you know how to group the Fat Fighting Foods. The Fat Fighting Food Combinations are actually very simple, and for best results with the Fat Fighting Foods, eat:

- 1 Fruit meal or snack each day and...
- 1 Protein meal or snack and...
- 1 Carbohydrate meal or snack and...
- 1 Fat meal or snack and...
- Unlimited vegetables with each meal!
- Unlimited vegetables in between meals!

Before I go into any further explanations, I'll explain why The Fat Fighting Food Combinations work.

Why Processed And Poorly Combined Foods Make You Gain Weight

Most people are unaware that the majority of overweight people are actually malnourished. The soil in the 21st century contains only 10% of the nutrients it contained 100 years ago because of intense commercial farming techniques and soil erosion. This means compared with 1907 you would need to eat 10 times the

amount of fruit and vegetables to get the same nutrients our grandparents and great grandparents used to consume on a daily basis.

While our foods do not contain as much nutrition, they contain the same calories. This means you would need to eat ten times the amount of food just to get the same nutrition as our ancestors. This is why so many people are overweight today.

If you're not taking supplements, or eating food fortified with supplements, this lack of nutrition can cause you to overeat, and stop your body from burning fat for fuel, as the shortage of nutrients puts your body into "starvation" or "storage" mode. Even though the foods available in stores and restaurants titillate the taste buds and fill the stomach, they provide very little of the vitamins, nutrients and macronutrients the body needs to provide energy, build new cells, and prevent disease.

So why doesn't everyone get fat? The answer is simple. If you have a good metabolism, the nutrient-poor food ends up in the toilet bowl, but if your metabolism is slow, this food is converted into fat and transported to the fat cells. Poor nutrition also manifests itself in a number of different ways, ranging from weight gain, sluggish metabolism, overeating, fatigue, skin conditions, digestive complaints; to more serious complaints such as arthritis, diabetes and even cancer.

Also, artificial additives can cause you to gain weight. Most people know that if you eat an excess of calories, this excess the body doesn't need is transported straight to the fat cells. The same applies to substances the body cannot recognize. Look at the box of any packaged meal and at the end of the list of ingredients you'll find some long, chemical-sounding names or E numbers. These are artificial additives, preservatives, flavorings and colorings. Our bodies have not evolved to process them effectively, so they are stored in the fat cells along with any excess calories you may have eaten.

The objective of the Fat Fighting Foods is to provide your body with 100% or more of the vitamins, minerals and macronutrients required to get the body back into balance. By this, I mean a healthy weight for your height and build, high lev-

els of energy and excellent digestion, absorption and elimination. All of these factors lead to having the best health possible, as well as never having to worry about weight gain.

Now, to get the body back into balance, we need to digest and absorb all the nutrients from our food. Unfortunately, with so much food available in the stores being over-processed or poorly combined, it becomes very difficult for the body to extract nutrients from “foods” it does not recognize. For example, did you know that margarine and similar low fat spreads are so close to plastics in molecular structure that they stay “fresh” for longer than butter or oils?

This is one of the reasons why all the Fat Fighting Foods are whole foods – natural foods the human body has recognized to be useful through thousands of years of evolution. You’ll notice that I haven’t added artificially low-calorie or low-fat foods to the list of Fat Fighting Foods. This is because the body simply doesn’t know what to do with them and very often stores them in the fat cells.

How The Fat Fighting Food Combinations Help You Lose Weight

The primary goal of the Fat Fighting Food Combinations are to give your body the nutrients required to help you become more satisfied with your food, so you never have to overeat, and provide just the right amount of energy to stimulate the fat cells to release their stores of excess fat. This is also made possible because every single Fat Fighting Food contains nutrients and other properties that stimulate weight loss.

The principle behind combining foods is tried and tested, but fairly simple: it’s based on the chemical environment required for the optimal digestion of specific foods. For example, Carbohydrates are digested mostly through the ptyalin enzyme in saliva, and require a more alkaline environment in the stomach for digestion. When you eat Carbs, the stomach does not produce much hydrochloric acid, as this acid kills the enzymes that break complex Carbs into simple sugars.

On the other hand, Proteins need an acid environment to be digested. When you eat proteins, the stomach produces hydrochloric acid, and an enzyme called Pep-

sin, which breaks the protein down into amino acids, which can then be absorbed and used by the body.

When you mix Carbs and Proteins together, the digestive system produces both the alkaline saliva enzymes, pepsin and hydrochloric acid, which create a less optimal chemical environment for digestion. The result is food taking longer to digest, essential nutrients not being fully extracted, and more opportunities for the food to be converted into body fat.

This situation is fine for the majority of people with a good metabolism and strong digestion and can maintain a healthy weight regardless of what they eat, but if you have a tendency to gain weight, or have difficulty in losing weight, combining your foods could be the answer to helping you lose weight faster, and keep it off forever.

You could benefit from trying out the Fat Fighting Food Combinations if you suffer from two of more of the following symptoms:

- Adult acne
- Bad breath
- Bloating – especially after eating
- Body odor
- Catarrh
- Constipation
- Dark circles under the eyes
- Dark colored urine
- Depression
- Diarrhea
- Difficulty in losing weight

- Digestive problems
- Excess sweating
- Excessive burping and flatulence
- Greasy hair and skin
- Hard stools
- Headaches
- Irritability
- Low energy levels
- Mind fog and forgetfulness
- Poor immune system
- Pre Menstrual Tension or Syndrome
- Sinus problems
- Sore or stiff joints
- Water retention
- Weight gain

I've included Fruits in a group of their own because the body digests them faster than it digests any other food group (including vegetables). When you eat any of the Fat Fighting Fruits on their own, your body can extract the nutrients without storing the fruit sugars as body fat. When fruit is eaten with Proteins, Carbs or Fats, this slows down the digestion, creating the symptoms listed above.

Fats include the oils, seeds, nuts and fatty fruits listed in the Fats Chapter. They are a separate food group because mixing Fats and Carbohydrates in large quantities stimulate insulin production and cause a high proportion of the fats to be converted into body fat instead of energy. Fat by itself does not stimulate the production of insulin, so its best eaten on its own or with unlimited vegetables, or

in very small quantities with Protein or Carbohydrate meals as a dressing or condiment.

Combining your food simply allows your digestive system to extract more nutrients out of your food, and move the food through the intestines with more efficiency, providing more opportunities for the food to be converted into energy, and less opportunities for that food to be converted into fat. It's a very simple and easy way to lose weight in the shortest time possible.

The Importance Of Vegetables And Fruits

Out of all the food groups listed in this book, vegetables and fruits contain the most nutrients per calorie. They truly are superfoods, and your body needs to stay thin and healthy. Because of this, and the amazing health benefits you get from eating them, the best way to eat your fruit and vegetables is raw. If you can aim for at least 50% of your food to come from raw vegetables, you'll lose the most weight possible. When vegetables are cooked – even lightly steamed, they lose some of their nutrients, so eating them in the form nature intended is the best way to ensure you consume the vitamins and minerals our body needs.

Raw vegetables and fruit do not have to be boring, and there are many ideas of how to eat your vegetables and fruit below:

- Fruit and / or vegetable juices
- Fruit smoothies
- Fruit salads
- Regular salads
- Gazpacho soup
- Finely chopped and mixed in with cooked food just before serving
- Crudites (thinly sliced vegetables) served with dips

What To Do If You Can't Eat Raw Vegetables

Some people have serious digestive disorders, which mean that raw vegetables aggravate their sensitive intestines. Other people cannot chew vegetables because of dental problems. Does this mean this diet is not for you? Absolutely not! You can still steam your vegetables or eat hot vegetable soups and lose weight. The key is to eat your fruit and vegetables in large quantities to make sure you're getting enough nutrients to stay healthy. You may need to add a few extra portions of fruit and vegetables to your diet to get the same nutrients, but you will still lose weight with the Fat Fighting Food Combinations.

Other Benefits Of The Fat Fighting Food Combinations

- Better digestion (great for IBS sufferers)
- Blood sugar management
- Clear skin
- Detoxification
- Increased energy levels
- Lose body fat
- Speeds up recovery from wounds and illnesses

Now I've explained to you how the Fat Fighting Food Combinations help you to lose weight, I'm going to explain how each different Fat Fighting Food Group can be transformed into a Fat Fighting Meal:

Fruit Meals

Fruit meals consist of any of the mouth-wateringly delicious fruits listed in the Fruits Chapter. You can have fruit as a meal or as a snack, depending on how much you like fruit, and what you feel like eating during the day.

Great ways to eat fruit include:

Eaten raw, on their own – fruit has to be the ultimate convenience food, as most fruits are small enough to form one portion and are packed with nutrition and sweetness. A large piece of fruit is great for someone who needs to eat on the run, or does not have the time to prepare an elaborate meal or snack.

Fruit salads – these can be bought or made at home, eaten for breakfast or as a snack. Two or more fruits, chopped up and served together make a fruit salad. Mixing fruits, especially fruits of different colors, give you even more nutrients than eating one single fruit. Fruit salads are an amazing way to get the nutrition you need.

Fruit smoothies – you can make a smoothie at home, by throwing a few different fruits into a blender and blending until smooth, or buy a fruit smoothie from the store or a juice bar. Smoothies tend to have more calories than fruit, but they are highly nutritious and great if you

Fruit Salad: Great Breakfast

Nutritionists at the Baja California Medical School in Mexico gave a group of women different types of breakfasts to eat, to work out which breakfasts which breakfasts satisfied them the most.

The breakfasts were: white bread, rice and bananas, whole wheat bread and boiled beans, fruit salad. 3 hours after the women had their breakfasts, they were given lunch at an all you can eat buffet.

The Nutritionists found that when the women had white bread for breakfast, they typically ate 872 calories at the buffet. Those that had fruit salad ate just 461 calories.

They concluded that obesity could be prevented with breakfasts containing all of the following:

- High fiber
- Low GI
- High Volume and high water content

Jiménez-Cruz A, Manuel Loustaunau-López V, Bacardi-Gascón M. The use of low glyce-mic and high satiety index food dishes in Mexico: a low cost approach to prevent and control obesity and diabetes. Nutr Hosp. 2006 May Jun;21(3):353-6.

suffer from digestive complaints, or cannot chew hard fruits

Fruit juice – similar to smoothies, but with much less fiber, fruit juice is the perfect way to consume your fruit if you're having digestive or dental difficulties. The best fruits are freshly squeezed, but like smoothies, fruit juice is high in calories, so do not over-indulge.

Dried fruit – this is a convenient way to eat fruit as a snack. Dried fruit can be bought in the store, in small convenient packages. While dried fruit does not have the same water density and nutrients of raw fruit, it is still a great alternative and a good way to satisfy a sweet tooth.

Baked or stewed fruits – while not the ideal way to eat fruits, baked fruits offer an alternative to eating fruits raw. Baked apples with cinnamon and raisins are delicious to eat in winter, and still contain some nutrition, making it better than commercial, store-bought desserts.

Aim to eat one fruit meal or snack a day, and make sure you're not eating the same fruits every day. There's a whole variety of fruits you can eat, so enjoy!

Protein Meals

Protein meals cover all the foods listed in the Protein Chapter, including vegetarian protein sources such as dairy, beans and tofu.

For best results, eat only one protein per meal, mixed with vegetables and maybe a light dressing or oil-based sauce. You are free to add herbs and spices to your protein meal to jazz it up, so your meals are always fun and interesting.

I would suggest you have protein either for breakfast, lunch or dinner (instead of as a snack), and give yourself a good-sized portion of protein every day. You can either follow the advice in the "How Much To Eat" section in the Protein Chapter, or eat a portion of protein that's about the size of the palm of your hand.

I've included a few ideas for protein meals below:

Eggs (any style) for breakfast. If you're a large or very active person, 2-3 eggs will be more than enough for you, or if you're small and inactive, 1-2 eggs.

Don't eat the eggs on their own, cook a few vegetables from the Vegetable Chapter, to create a well-rounded, satisfying breakfast.

Protein salad, consisting of mixed vegetables, chicken, turkey, fish or vegetarian proteins. This makes for an easy to prepare lunch that you can take to work, or buy from any sandwich or salad bar. Remember to go easy on the dressing!

Stir fry is a fantastic way to mix proteins and vegetables, and you can experiment with different vegetables, and herbs and spices from China, Thailand and Japan. They are healthy and delicious, and you can make them as large as you like, provided that you stick to your protein requirements.

Baked fish, chicken, meat with steamed vegetables. This is another fast meal choice that allows you to choose a variety of different marinades for your protein. There are many different proteins you can try for dinner, and different ways to season them, so you'll always eat something different and exciting.

Sashimi is great if you like Japanese food. In fact many Japanese restaurants offer different forms of fish or tofu and tempeh, served with exotic vegetable dishes. If you don't like Japanese foods, most ethnic restaurants offer healthy low fat meat dishes with exciting vegetable dishes. Just ask your server for advice on which foods are best for losing weight.

Carbohydrate Meals

Carbohydrate meals contain all the carbohydrates listed in the Carbohydrates Chapter, when combined with any of the vegetables listed in the Chapter on Vegetables.

Even though refined carbohydrates can cause weight gain, they are nothing to be afraid of. Refined carbohydrates include sugars, honey, syrups, sodas, cordials and food made of white flour including cakes, cookies, white bread.

As long as you remember these simple guidelines, you will not gain weight from eating carbohydrates:

Select wholegrain carbohydrates instead of their refined versions –

this means wholewheat bread instead of white bread, brown rice instead of white rice. Wholegrains are more satisfying than refined carbohydrates, and do not stimulate weight gain as much.

Do not mix carbohydrates with large quantities of fats – carbs are well-known for stimulating the body's production of insulin, the hormone that causes fat gain. Large quantities of carbs combined with fat are a fat-gaining combination.

Remember to eat your carbohydrates every day, as this is not a low-carb diet. Carbohydrates are vital for keeping your energy levels up, and provide fiber and many essential nutrients you cannot get just by eating proteins and vegetables.

Avoid the use of sweeteners in food such as sugar, honey and artificial sweeteners like aspartame or saccharine. Stevia, which can be purchased from any health food store is an excellent alternative to sugar, it has no calories and best of all, its 100% natural!

Ideas for carbohydrate meals include:

- Wholegrain breakfast cereals or muesli with rice milk or oat milk
- Breads made of wholewheat, barley and spelt, with grilled vegetables, soups or salad.
- Oatmeal or porridge made with rice or oat milk
- Wholewheat pasata with tomato-based sauces, such as Arabiatta
- Vegetable lasagna or pasta bake
- Vegetable soups with barley, rice or other whole grains
- Rice dishes, including curries, risottos
- Home made vegeburgers in whole-meal rolls

- Vegetarian pies, samosas and wraps made with whole grains

Stick to one carbohydrate meal a day, choosing from the selection presented to you in the Carbohydrates chapter for maximum weight loss.

You might be wondering whether fruits are carbohydrates. For the purposes of this plan, they do not count as carbohydrates, as all the fruits listed in the fruits chapter are water-rich, and have excellent fat-fighting properties.

Fat Meals

Eating the right kinds of fats is an important part of losing body fat quickly, as specific fats can help you lose weight. This is partly because eating fats give you the energy required to stay active and fit; they stimulates the production of lipase, the enzyme that breaks down dietary and body fat for energy; and they are important for absorbing fat-soluble nutrients such as vitamins A, D, E and K. Any vitamin deficiencies in your diet can create a “starvation response” where the body holds on to excess fat stores because vital nutrients appear to be in short supply.

Even though many weight loss experts promote low-fat diets, these diets leave you without specific compounds required to release excess body fat. The fats listed in the Fats Chapter are rich in essential fatty acids and other nutrients, which help you lose weight while reducing cravings and keeping your energy levels high.

I would recommend you have one fat-based meal or snack a day, to help you to stick to your diet. These fats can be extremely satisfying, and can prevent over-eating and nutrient deficiencies while you’re losing weight. In addition to controlling your appetite, these fats also have the following amazing health benefits:

- They increase your metabolic rate
- They balance the blood glucose levels and eliminate food cravings
- They improve your mood and combat depression (and comfort eating)
- They increase satiety, making you more satisfied with less calories

- They reduce hunger for longer than carbohydrates
- They support the nervous system and prevent stress-based or comfort eating
- They assist digestion, and a good digestive process will convert foods to energy instead of body fat
- They increase your energy levels and stamina, helping you to stay more active and burn more calories
- They support your endocrine system, particularly the thyroid gland, which is important in weight regulation
- They help the kidneys to excrete retained water, which can have a dramatic effect on the way you look, as excess water can make people appear fatter than they actually are

Best of all, if you eat these fats separately from carbohydrates, they will not be converted into body fat, allowing you to enjoy delicious satisfying portions without the fear of gaining weight. This is largely because fats, especially Omega fatty acids, stimulate the production of glucagon, this is the hormone that tells the body to burn its stores of body fat (whereas insulin tells the body to store fat.)

Maintaining an optimal level of essential fatty acids in the body send a clear message to the body that food is in plentiful supply, which enables weight loss, avoiding the dreaded starvation response.

In case you are wondering about the calories in fats, please don't worry. The fats we have recommended in the Fats Chapter are used by the body to produce hormones and cell membranes. Omega 3 fatty acids actually stimulate fat-burning enzymes in the body, which is why they are used by athletes and body builders to maintain low body fat percentages.

The Fat Fighting Fats can be eaten on their own as a snack, or as a complete meal with vegetables.

Examples of fat meals or snacks include:

- Trail mixes, which you can make at home or buy in the store
- Mixed seeds (these can be toasted and spiced, or you can buy them ready-spiced.)
- Mixed nuts and almonds
- Home made granola consisting of nuts and seeds (especially flaxseeds or linseeds)
- Hummus with crudités such as sliced carrots, cucumbers and broccoli
- Avocados on their own, as guacamole dips or in salads
- Olives on their own as snacks, or in salads and sauces
- Vegetable soups with serving of flaxseed or linseed oil poured on top to boost the flavor and fat-burning benefits
- Nut roasts, which you can make from scratch or purchase from a health food store
- Smoothies made with almond, hemp, or nut milks

Although fish is listed under Proteins, they are also rich in Omega fatty acids. To maximize your weight loss opt for cold-water fish such as mackerel and salmon.

Having made recommendations for fat meals, there are fats that you need to avoid. For example, artificial fats including hydrogenated and trans fats, and those that have been processed with high temperatures, oxidization, and chemical transformations including margarine, cheap vegetable oils and low calorie spray on fats.

Studies have shown that these highly processed fats not only contribute to obesity, but increase the rate of heart disease, raised cholesterol levels, gallstones and cancers.

How To Space Out Your Fat Fighting Meals

For best results, eat little and often. Eat a meal every 3-4 hours, or as soon as you get the urge to eat again. Smaller meals maintain your blood sugar levels, as they provide your body with just enough fuel to keep you going for the next few hours. This will help your body stay in “fat burning” mode, as there’s always enough fuel to carry out whatever activities are required of your body.

Here are a few ideas on how to space out your meals

Breakfast	7am	7:30am	8am
Mid-morning snack	10am	10:30am	11am
Lunch	2pm	2:30pm	3pm
Mid-afternoon snack	5pm	5:30pm	6pm
Diner	7pm	7:30pm	8pm

Or you can eat whenever you feel hungry – that’s the best way to lose weight for you.

Large meals – whether they consist of huge amounts of protein, carbs or both overload your body, increasing insulin production and increase the amount of food that’s stored as body fat. If you eat just enough to Wresters are given supply you with the energy you need for the next few hours, you will not have a large surge of insulin, and will not gain weight.

If you like to exercise in the morning, try to eat something as soon as you wake up. Even if it’s a handful of seeds, this will help blood sugar stay level and fuel your workout. New research indicates that exercising on an empty stomach is not the best way to lose weight.

How Sumo Wrestlers Gain Weight

One of the keys to success as a Sumo Wrestler is to be heavier than your opponent, to avoid being pushed out of the ring. Sumo a special diet to maximize weight gain.

Sumo Wrestlers exercise on an empty stomach, which helps lower blood sugar and put the body into “starvation” or “fat storage mode” and they remain hungry throughout the day, so they are starving by the time they are given their meal. At mealtimes, they are given 3 to 4 large servings of Chankonabe – a stew containing different types of protein sources, rice or noodles, and beer. After their meal, they have a nap for a few hours, which allows the body to store as much of the excess calories as fat, instead of working it

Foods You Need To Avoid

Before we finish this chapter, I’d like to go through with you the importance of avoiding “artificial” foods. Examples of artificial foods are:

- Artificial fats like margarine, low fat spreads and spray on fats
- Packaged “diet foods” including low carb, low fat, low sugar, etc
- Refined “white” carbs, such as white rice and white bread
- Refined sugar and sweetened foods, for example ice cream, sodas, cakes, cookies, syrups, candies, sweets and chocolate

- Artificial sugars such as aspartame, sugar free gum, sugar free mints and diet sodas

Foods like these are unnatural, more difficult to digest and interfere with your body's optimal fat burning abilities. Most of these foods contain artificial flavorings that make your taste buds used to eating foods your body has no use for.

If you were to examine the nutritional value of most of these artificial foods, you'd find that they do not contain the nutrients your body needs to stay thin and healthy, and those foods that contain nutrients are so highly processed, your body probably will not recognize them, and would transform them into body fat anyway.

An easy rule of thumb in choosing what to eat is to avoid foods made in a factory or a laboratory. Buy the ingredients yourself and make your own meals from natural, whole ingredients and you will lose weight.

What To Do If You Have A Serious Illness

If you're sick, I recommend you focus on getting better, rather than becoming thin. However, the Fat Fighting Foods are also very nourishing as they provide the vitamins, minerals, and macro-nutrients your body requires to stay healthy. Any doctor will tell you that fruit, vegetables, low fat proteins, healthy carbohydrates and healthy fats are good for anyone to eat.

If you're determined to lose weight, its best to take the list of Fat Fighting Foods to your doctor or primary healthcare provider and work with him or her to create an eating plan that is right for your particular condition. (And if your doctor tells you that you should not be eating fruit, vegetables, low fat proteins, healthy carbs and healthy fats... it's time to change your doctor and find a healthcare provider who can give you sensible nutritional advice.)

What To Do If You Don't Have Time To Prepare Several Meals

We all lead busy lives, and would love to have a personal chef to prepare healthy meals for us, but who can afford a full time cook?!? The beauty of the Fat Fight-

ing Food Combinations is that you can still eat healthily and lose weight even if you're very busy.

I'm assuming you have a few minutes a day to prepare something to eat, because everyone's got to eat, right? So here are some really easy suggestions for people who only have 5 to 10 minutes to prepare their meals:

Whole wheat sandwiches or pitta breads containing salads, baked or grilled vegetables can be bought easily from any sandwich store. If you're at university, or eat lunch in a staff restaurant, these simple ingredients are readily available to create a Carbohydrate meal

Oats are very quick to prepare and very easy to eat. This makes a wholesome filling breakfast of slow-burning carbohydrates that give you lots of energy throughout the morning

Fruit salads can be bought from any store at a reasonable price. I buy 3 or 4 and put them in the refrigerator. They make a delicious breakfast or snack.

Eat a piece of fruit as a snack (or two) from the Fruits chapter. No preparation necessary, just rinse and eat!

Eggs are an excellent fast food and there are many ways to prepare them. If you want an omelette for breakfast, chop your vegetables the night before and put in a container, ready for the morning. If you don't have the time for that, scramble your eggs in a non-stick pan and cook your vegetables (tomatoes, mushroom etc) on the side.

Fish, meat and poultry are pretty easy to cook, and can be marinated in lemon or vegetable juices, herbs, spices and salt in the morning, or just before cooking. Put your protein in a ceramic dish and bake for the recommended number of minutes then steam your vegetables before serving, and you have a wholesome, satisfying meal.

Want to eat vegetarian proteins? Canned beans come ready to cook, just add herbs, spices and steamed or raw vegetables and you have a super-nutritious meal.

Avocados are a delicious fast food. Scoop out the stone and eat the flesh with a spoon for a satisfying fat snack, or chop them up and mix them into a salad for a more substantial fat meal.

Most stores sell mixed nuts and seeds in packets. A small pack of mixed nuts or seeds provide you with enough essential fatty acids to stay trim and satisfied. There's no excuse for not getting your healthy fats with this convenience food!

Order the garden salad in sandwich or salad bars, and add an olive oil based dressing. It tastes delicious and will keep you satisfied for hours afterwards.

Many busy people spend time in the weekends preparing what they are going to eat during the week, separating the food into smaller portions and freezing them. This is very helpful if you don't have the time to cook from scratch during the week

What To Do If You're Hungry All The Time

When combining foods in the way we've suggested, your digestive system becomes more efficient, which leads to less bloating or food sitting in your stomach "like a brick". However, in some people, this increased efficiency can mean increased hunger.

If you're very active and find yourself getting very hungry even after following these recommendations, then you're not eating enough to provide your body with the energy required to get you through the day.

Make up a large box of cherry tomatoes, chopped peppers, chopped cucumber, or whatever vegetables you have at home with a nice dip, and allow yourself to graze on this all day, in between meals. You won't be hungry if you have this constant supply of food, and you'll increase your weight loss by supplying extra nutrients and managing your blood sugar. (Best Option!)

Have a Fat Fighting Drink with you at all times. Water is the best, as it hydrates the body and allows fat-burning chemical reactions to take place. In fact, everyone should drink water throughout the day because its so good for you. Herbal teas are a good alternative, and the Chinese Fat Burning Teas described in the Fat

Fighting Drinks book are also great for accelerating your weight loss, and keeping hunger pangs at bay. (Highly Recommended For Everyone)

You can increase your portion sizes to a more satisfactory amount, while still following the Fat Fighting Food Combinations. If you get your portion sizes right for your activity levels and weight, you will still lose weight. If you're tall, very heavy or very active, you're going to need more food than someone who is small and doesn't have much weight to lose. Only you know how much food is right for you, so judge your portion sizes carefully. The key is to eat to the point of satisfaction, not to excess. (Best Option For Larger Or Active People)

Alternatively, make sure you eat your Carbohydrate meal during your most active time of the day. For example, if you go to the gym in the morning, make sure your breakfast is a carbohydrate one. If you work out later in the day, then the meal before your workout should be the Carb meal. Planning your meals around your activity can give you the required fuel to be active around the clock. (Best Option For Active People)

Another option is to add one mixed meal a day, to get rid of hunger pangs. A mixed meal is a meal containing a mix of Carbohydrates, Proteins, Fats or Fruits for example egg on toast, oatmeal and fruits, rice pudding made of milk and rice, fruit with mixed seeds, nuts and yogurt. I would suggest a mixed meal in the morning because this gives your body more time to process the difficult to digest combinations, and burn off the calories.

What To Do If You're Eating Out

You can still eat out, entertain or visit friends for meals while following the Fat Fighting Food Combinations. You just need to be careful with what you order. I've listed a few tips for eating out below:

A garden salad, tomato salad, or mushroom salad makes a good starter or appetizer in any restaurant, allowing you to eat the same amount of courses as your companions

If you order the steak, have it without potatoes, just get a few side orders of vegetables instead

If you're caught out in a fast food restaurant like McDonalds or Burger King, just order a salad and skip the dressing. If its time for your protein salad, then have a more elaborate salad with chicken or seafood

In sandwich bars like Subway, the vegetarian whole wheat options create a filling Carbohydrate meal. Add a side salad and you will definitely not be hungry!

When everyone is having dessert, choose Green Tea or a gourmet Espresso coffee and look sophisticated while everyone is eating fattening, clogging desserts.

If invited to a celebration and there's nothing healthy to eat, then give yourself the evening off and eat a regular portion of what everyone else is having. Don't feel guilty, just enjoy your break and start again the next day.

A Final Note

I think we should all strive to be happy as much as possible. Being overweight can cause stress and unhappiness, but so can depriving yourself of good food. When you're following this plan, you should never go hungry. Never allow yourself to feel deprived. Eat when your body tells you to eat, but keep a variety of Fat Fighting Foods close by, and you'll never have to worry about your weight.

If you have a "bad day" and eat something fattening, don't beat yourself up about it, just stick to the Fat Fighting Foods the next day. The Plan allows you to lose weight, even if you have one or two slip-ups.

There is no excuse to be bored on this diet. There are so many herbs and spices in the stores to add variety to your meals. Don't think that losing weight is about eating bland foods, because it is not. Give yourself the goal of trying at least two new herbs or spices a week, and see which you prefer. If you're not a natural chef, then buy mixed spices. Every store sells mixed Chinese spices, mixed Italian herbs etc. Make sure you have a good organic sea salt, black pepper, apple cider vinegar and lemon juice, and you can work wonders with your food.

Allow yourself a tiny amount of healthy fat to help your protein, carbohydrate or vegetable meals taste good. One teaspoon is fine, or you can use more if you don't eat your fat meal that day.

Most importantly – have fun. Enjoy the wonderful Fat Fighting Foods nature has to offer and your perfect weight will soon follow.

Visit www.fatfightingfood.com/resources/ for updates and more information.