

Adopting a Brain-Healthy Diet

Information and Recipes





Brain-Healthy Food Basics

Many of our reasoned and deliberate care practices at Silverado can be attributed to research backed by world-renowned neurologists who are at the forefront of brain health. Extensive studies have suggested that certain foods can reduce the risk of Alzheimer's and dementia and increase overall health and wellness. We've gathered a list of top recommended foods you should include in your diet for a healthier brain.

Blueberries

Researchers have found that blueberries help reduce oxidative stress on the brain and may reduce age-related effects like Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Diets rich in blueberries significantly improved learning capacity and motor skills.

Oily fish

Eating wild salmon and other oily fish high in omega-3s has been associated with less brain shrinkage. Omega-3s, which are essential for brain function, cannot be made by the body and must be obtained through diet. High levels of essential fatty acids have been linked to lower risk of developing Alzheimer's and memory loss. Other fish that are an abundant source of omega-3s include trout, mackerel, herring and sardines. For a vegetarian diet, these benefits can be obtained through seeds and nuts like flaxseeds, soybeans, pumpkin seeds and walnuts.

Nuts and seeds

Nuts and seeds are rich in vitamin E, which is linked to less cognitive decline and aging. Healthy nuts include walnuts, hazelnuts, Brazil nuts, almonds, cashews, peanuts, sunflower seeds and flax seed. Pumpkin seeds are rich in zinc, which is known to enhance memory and thinking skills.

Brain-Healthy Food Basics (continued)

Whole grains

Whole grains, such as oatmeal, whole-grain breads and brown rice, are a healthy supply of energy for the brain, which improves our ability to focus. They also reduce the risk for heart disease and promote all around cardiovascular health. Because whole grains are slowly and steadily released into the bloodstream, the brain is kept mentally alert throughout the day.

Sage

Sage has a long reputation for improving memory. Sage as an essential oil can be used for soothing baths, massage oils or topically for clearer skin. The scent stimulates the limbic system, which is the brain's center for memory and emotion. Fresh sage can also be added to your diet by sprinkling on food for extra taste.

Broccoli

Broccoli is rich in Vitamin K, which enhances thinking, reasoning, imagining and learning words.

Tea

Freshly brewed tea has a modest amount of caffeine, which promotes healthy blood flow, boosts brain power and enhances memory and focus. Keep in mind that powdered teas or sweetened teas with added sugars and milk reduce nutritional value -- stick to freshly brewed.

Vitamin B

Vitamin B6, B12, and folic acid are known to reduce risk of stroke, cognitive impairment and Alzheimer's. Studies show that a group of patients with mild cognitive impairment with regular doses of B6, B12 and folic acid had significantly less brain-shrinkage compared to a group given a placebo vitamin.

Avocados

Avocados are loaded with monounsaturated fat, which triggers healthy blood flow. They are actually the fattiest plant foods in existence, avocados can reduce inflammation. Avocados are very high in potassium, even more than bananas, which is responsible for lowering blood pressure.

Tomatoes

Lycopene is a powerful antioxidant found in tomatoes, known to protect against cell damage that can occur in a brain affected by dementia and Alzheimer's. Tomatoes are also rich in vitamin C, and have nutrients that support cardiovascular health.

Suggested to avoid: red meat, butter, cheese, pastries and fried foods.



The MIND Diet

A recent study has shown that the MIND diet (an acronym for Mediterranean Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay), a diet heavy in berries, leafy greens and seafood, appears to have a positive impact on cognitive ability. The MIND diet is a combination of the Mediterranean diet and the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet.

A study conducted by researchers from the Rush University Medical Center in Chicago and the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston found that participants that strictly adhered to the MIND diet were 52% less likely to be diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease! Although the study's findings are not able to show the exact correlation as to why a healthy diet has such a huge positive impact on cognitive ability, it is still a great start in better understanding the connection between our diet, health and steps we can take now to prevent the onset of dementia.

recipe:

Sides & Lighter Fare



Parsley Quinoa Salad

ingredients

- 1/2 cup quinoa (dry)
- 4 bunches fresh parsley
- 1/2 small onion (1/4 cup diced)
- 1/2 red bell pepper
- 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
- 2 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp. honey (local is best)
- Sea salt and fresh milled pepper to taste

directions

1. Cook quinoa according to package instructions and let cool (quinoa will swell to about 3 times its original size).
2. Wash, dry and chop parsley (you can use a salad spinner if you have one or just shake off the excess water and when chopping, it doesn't have to be too fine, you want some texture to it) then place chopped parsley into a large bowl.
3. Wash and dice the onion and pepper, add to the chopped parsley.
4. Add all remaining ingredients to the bowl — mix, serve and enjoy!

*Best served same day, but will keep 24 hours so can be made in advance if needed.

Enjoy!

recipe:

Sides & Lighter Fare



Asparagus with Lemon & Garlic

ingredients

- 1 lb (1 bunch) fresh asparagus, bottoms trimmed if necessary
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp water
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and cut in half
- 1 lemon, juiced
- salt and pepper to taste
- shaved Parmesan cheese (optional)

directions

1. In a large saute pan with a lid, on high heat, add the asparagus, olive oil, water and garlic. Cook for about 2 minutes uncovered, or until the water has almost evaporated.
2. Toss the asparagus with tongs, cover the pan and cook for 1 minute.
3. Remove the lid and toss the asparagus again. Put the lid back on and repeat until the asparagus are crisp-tender, about 5 minutes. The asparagus may brown slightly in spots, which adds to pan-roasted flavor.
4. Add the lemon juice and toss to combine. Remove the garlic. Salt and pepper to taste. Serve hot.

Enjoy!

recipe:

Sides & Lighter Fare



Red Quinoa & Mushroom Pilaf with Dill

ingredients

- 2 1/4 cups homemade or low-sodium store-bought chicken stock
- 1/2 oz mixed dried mushrooms
- 1 cup red quinoa
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 4 oz cremini or white mushrooms, quartered
- 1 shallot, coarsely chopped
- Coarse salt
- 1 tbsp finely chopped fresh thyme
- Freshly ground pepper
- 1 tbsp unsalted butter
- 3 tbsp finely chopped fresh dill
- 2 tbsp finely chopped chives
- 1 Valencia or navel orange, peel and pith removed, flesh thinly sliced into rounds

directions

1. Bring stock to a boil; pour over dried mushrooms in a small bowl. Soak until soft, about 6 minutes.
2. Pour liquid through a fine sieve into a bowl; set aside.
3. Coarsely chop soaked mushrooms; set aside.
4. Rinse quinoa thoroughly in a fine sieve; drain.
5. Heat oil in a large pot over medium-high heat until hot but not smoking; add fresh mushrooms, shallot, and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until mushrooms and shallot have released their liquid and are slightly caramelized, about 7 mins.
6. Add quinoa; cook, stirring, until it begins to pop and crackle, about 5 minutes.
7. Add reserved soaked mushrooms, reserved soaking liquid and thyme to pot; bring to a boil.
8. Stir; cover and reduce heat. Simmer until quinoa is tender but still chewy, about 20 minutes. Stir in 1/4 teaspoon salt and pepper to taste, add butter.
9. Just before serving, stir in dill and chives; add orange and gently toss.

Enjoy!

recipe:

Main Course



Seared Salmon with Fresh Lemon and Garlic

ingredients

- 1 lb fresh salmon fillet (skin on is ok)
- 1 fresh lemon
- 1 large clove of garlic
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Sea salt and fresh milled pepper to taste

directions

1. Cut salmon into 4 – 4oz. pieces and set aside.
2. Wash lemon. Zest with micro-plane or grate zest with fine side of box grater (just need the outer layer, need to be careful not to get the inner pith, the bitter white part just under skin). Cut zested lemon in half and squeeze juice over salmon fillets.
3. Peel and mince garlic.
4. Rub minced garlic, lemon zest, sea salt and fresh milled pepper onto the flesh side of salmon fillets if using skin on.
5. Heat olive oil in skillet on medium high. Place “rub side” down into hot oil, sear 2 minutes undisturbed (if you turn it too soon it will stick), turn and repeat. Salmon, like most fish, cooks quickly and has a tendency to become dry if cooked too long and/or too high of a temperature. It should take 3-4 minutes on each side, depending on the thickness of the fillet. When it is done you are looking to create a nice brown crust “sear” and the translucency of the flesh should become opaque and begin to flake easily.

Enjoy!

recipe:

Main Course



Grilled Salmon with Lemon Juice & Herbs

ingredients

- 1/4 cup of fresh cilantro, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup of fresh oregano, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup of green onion, finely chopped
- 1 clove of garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp of lemon juice
- 1 tbsp of olive oil
- 1/4 tsp of pepper
- 1 lb fresh salmon fillets

directions

1. In a small bowl combine herbs, garlic, lemon juice, olive oil and pepper, set aside.
2. Remove skin from salmon fillets. Cut into 4 - 4 oz portions.
3. Gently rub oil and herbs onto both sides of the salmon, making sure each fillet is heavily coated with the mixture.
4. Grill salmon fillets over a medium flame for about 3-4 minutes on each side. Serve immediately.

Enjoy!

recipe:

Desserts & Treats



Black Bean Sweet Potato Chocolate Fudge Bars

ingredients

- 1 can (14 oz.) unsalted black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup oven roasted mashed sweet potatoes
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/3 cup plus 2 tbsp maple syrup
- 1/3 cup virgin coconut oil
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup natural unprocessed unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/2 cup dark bittersweet chocolate chips (optional)

directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F degrees and line an 8" x 8" square baking pan with parchment paper, leaving about 1" hang over on edges of pan.
2. Add all ingredients except chocolate chips to the food processor and mix until mixture is smooth (this can take a couple of minutes). Use a small spatula to stir in chocolate chips (optional).
3. Spoon batter into parchment-lined pan and smooth out.
4. Bake for 30-35 minutes or until surface begins to crack and edges have pulled away from the parchment paper.
5. Cool in pan for approximately 10 minutes. Carefully and quickly (so the bars don't split down the middle) lift out of the pan using edges of the parchment paper and place onto a cooling rack.
6. Once at room temperature, transfer to a flat surface (like a cookie sheet) and place in fridge 2-3 hours, preferably overnight.
7. Cut into bars and serve. Store any uneaten bars in fridge in a covered container.

Enjoy!

recipe:

Desserts & Treats



Chocolate Chip Chickpea Blondies with Sea Salt

ingredients

- 1 can (15 oz) chickpeas (garbanzo beans) drained and rinsed
- 1/2 cup all natural almond butter or peanut butter
- 1/3 cup pure maple syrup or agave nectar (you can also use regular honey)
- 2 tsp vanilla
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 1/3 cup plus 2 tbsp vegan (or regular) chocolate chips (use dark chocolate chips for a lower sugar option)
- Sea salt, for sprinkling

directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F and spray an 8" x 8" pan with nonstick cooking spray.
2. In a food processor, add all ingredients except chocolate chips and sea salt and process until batter is smooth. Fold in 1/3 cup of chocolate chips.
3. Note: Batter will be thick and super delicious, and you could actually just eat it on its own!
4. Spread batter evenly in prepared pan then sprinkle 2 tbsp of chocolate chips on top. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean and edges are golden brown - do not overcook!
5. Cool in pan for 20 minutes on wire rack. Sprinkle with sea salt, then cut into squares. Makes 16 blondies.

Tip: To prevent the batter from sticking to the spatula, spray it with a nonstick spray.

Enjoy!

recipe:

Desserts & Treats



Chia Coconut Pudding

ingredients

- 2 cups full fat coconut milk
- 1 tbsp pure maple syrup
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/4 cup chia seeds
- 1 cup mixed berries

directions

1. In a large bowl, whisk together coconut milk, maple syrup and vanilla extract. Slowly whisk in chia seeds. (The chia seeds will clump if you put them in too quickly.)
2. Stir every few minutes for the first 10 minutes, then cover and refrigerate the mixture. Let thicken for at least 3 hours, or as long as a few days.
3. When ready to serve, divide the chia coconut pudding into bowls or jars and top with berries.

Enjoy!

recipe:

Desserts & Treats



Lemon Bars

ingredients

crust:

- 1/2 cup dates, pitted
- 1/3 cup walnuts (any nut will work, use pumpkin seeds or oats for nut free version)
- Pinch of salt

filling:

- 1 1/2 cups unsweetened coconut flakes or 1/2 cup coconut butter
- 1 tbsp maple syrup or 2 pitted dates
- 2 tbsp lemon zest (organic preferred) from about 2 lemons
- 1/2 cup fresh lemon juice (from 2-3 lemons)
- 2 tbsp coconut oil
- 1/2 tsp turmeric (for color)

directions

for the crust:

1. In a food processor, chop the dates, nuts, and salt until a dough like consistency is formed.
2. In an 8" x 8" pan lined with parchment paper, press the crust into the bottom in an even layer. Wet your hands slightly, as it is sticky.

for the filling:

1. If using coconut flakes, blend in a food processor until smooth and creamy.
2. Add the rest of the filling ingredients to the coconut butter and blend until smooth.
3. Adjust sweetener as needed, but remember the crust is sweet as well.
4. Pour the lemon mixture onto the crust and let set in the fridge for at least 1 hour.
5. Cut into bars.
6. Store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to one week.

Enjoy!

recipe:

Desserts & Treats



No-Bake Superfood Breakfast Cookies

ingredients

- 4 cups gluten-free rolled oats
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon
- Pinch of sea salt
- 1 scoop protein powder (optional)
- 1 cup smooth nut butter of choice (cashew butter suggested)
- 1 cup brown rice syrup (honey/ agave/maple syrup can be used)
- 1/2 cup pumpkin seeds
- 1/4 cup dried unsweetened cranberries
- 1-2 tbsp unsweetened coconut flakes to taste
- 1/4 cup dairy-free chocolate chips

directions

1. Line a large plate or tray with parchment paper and set aside.
2. In a large mixing bowl, combine oats, cinnamon, sea salt and protein powder (optional) and set aside.
3. In a microwave safe bowl or stove top, melt the nut butter with the brown rice syrup until fully combined.
4. Pour the wet mixture into the dry mixture and mix until fully combined. Stir in the pumpkin seeds, cranberries and coconut flakes until fully incorporated.
5. Using your hands, form into golf sized balls and place on lined plate/tray. Press firmly into a cookie shape and top with chocolate chips. Refrigerate for 30 minutes, or until firm.

Enjoy!

recipe:

Desserts & Treats



Superfood Spheres

ingredients

- 1/4 cup hemp hearts
- 1/2 cup dried unsweetened coconut, plus extra for rolling
- 1/2 cup oats, coarsely ground in food processor
- 1 cup crispy brown rice cereal
- Pinch of sea salt
- 1/2 cup almond butter, raw if possible
- 1 tbsp spirulina
- 1 tsp maca
- 1/4 cup maple syrup

directions

1. In one bowl, combine the hemp hearts, coconut, oats, brown rice cereal and salt.
2. In a second bowl, combine the almond butter, spirulina, maca, and maple syrup. Be sure to mix the spirulina in well with the other ingredients.
3. Combine the almond butter mixture with the coconut mixture and thoroughly mix.
4. Take a golf ball size amount of the mixture and roll into a ball, then roll in the remaining coconut. Continue until all the mixture is used.
5. Store in the refrigerator.

Tip: Slightly wet your hands to prevent mixture from sticking to them.

Enjoy!