



FOOD TO HEAL • 002

Polyphenols

Support your gut health with a diet
rich in polyphenols

What are polyphenols

Polyphenols are natural compounds found in many plant foods. They're part of what gives fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts, and seeds their colour and flavour. While there are thousands of different types of polyphenols, there are four main families of polyphenols with unique chemical structures commonly discussed — flavonoids, lignans, stilbenes, and phenolic acids.

They've long been linked to heart and metabolic health, and more recently, research shows they also support the gut. By nourishing the gut microbiome, polyphenols can help improve digestion, balance, and overall gut function.

Foods high in polyphenols

Increase your intake of polyphenols by including the following foods in your daily diet.

Fruits (150g)



- Apple
- Black elderberry
- Blackberry
- Blackcurrant
- Blueberry
- Grapes
- Kakadu plum
- Peach
- Plum
- Prune
- Raspberry
- Redcurrant
- Strawberry
- Sweet cherry

Vegetables & legumes (75g)



- Asparagus
- Broccoli
- Celery leaves
- Chicory leaves
- Globe artichoke head
- Olives
- Onion, red
- Onion, yellow
- Shallot
- Soy
- Spinach

Grains, nuts & seeds (30g)



- Chestnut
- Flaxseed meal
- Pecan
- Rye, whole grain
- Walnut

Seasonings (dried)



- Cloves
- Rosemary
- Sage, common
- Thyme, common
- Turmeric

Beverages (150mL)



- Coffee, filter
- Black tea
- Green tea
- Red wine

How to have a polyphenol-rich diet

- Follow a Mediterranean-style eating pattern, which naturally includes many polyphenol-rich foods.
- Polyphenols are what give plant foods their colour, so aim for a rainbow on your plate, especially reds and deep purple for the highest polyphenol intake.
- Try adding cacao to your smoothies, make a homemade hot chocolate or mix into a chia pudding.
- Combine walnuts and pecans with some fresh berries such as blueberries, raspberries, blackberries or strawberries for a colourful, fibre-rich snack or salad.
- Mix ground flaxseed meal into your morning oats, or sprinkle onto some yoghurt
- Include some olives in your next homemade pasta or pizza dish, or make an olive tapenade dip.
- Cook with a variety of herbs and spices, including cloves, rosemary, thyme, ginger and turmeric.

Recipe ideas

Sweet potato and pecan brownie (makes 12)

Ingredients:

- 2 cups sweet potato puree (refer to instructions)
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup maple syrup
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup almond butter
- 3 tbsp coconut or olive oil
- 1 cup cacao powder
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup oat or all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped pecans
- 1 tsp baking powder
- Pinch of salt

Method:

1. To make sweet potato puree – cook 3 medium sized sweet potatoes to your desired method. Remove skin and blend the cooked sweet potatoes (using a blender, food processor or electric stick mixer) to reach a smooth puree consistency. Set aside and allow to cool.
2. Preheat oven to 170 degrees. Line a 20x20cm baking tray with baking paper.
3. In a large mixing bowl add the wet ingredients – sweet potato puree, maple syrup, almond butter, oil and stir to combine.
4. Add the cacao powder, flour, baking powder and salt to the wet ingredients and mix well.
5. Pour the brownie mix into the lined baking tray. Top with chopped pecans
6. Bake for 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow the brownies to cool for 20–30 mins.
7. Slice into 12 even pieces. Serve at room temperature or warmed. Store in the refrigerator for up to 7 days.
8. Enjoy warm or chilled as a satisfying way to add plant-based goodness to your week.



Roasted asparagus and broccoli salad (serves 4)

Ingredients:

- 500g chat potatoes, washed and cut into quarters
- 1 medium head of broccoli, washed, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 8 asparagus spears, washed, cut into 1.5 cm pieces
- 2 tbsp Olive oil, plus extra for roasting
- 2 tsp garlic powder
- 2 tsp onion powder
- ½ tsp dried thyme
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 lemon, zest and juice
- 2 tbsp Greek yoghurt
- 2 tsp maple syrup

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 220°C. Line a baking tray with baking paper.
2. Bring a medium saucepan of water to boil and add a pinch of salt.
3. Once the water is boiling, add in the potatoes and cook for 10 minutes until tender. Strain the potatoes and place them on the lined baking tray. Season the potatoes with salt, half the garlic and onion powders and add the garlic cloves to the tray. Drizzle the potatoes and garlic with olive oil, toss to coat the potatoes and then spread the potatoes into a single layer on the tray. Cook on the bottom rack of the oven for 25–30 minutes.
4. On a separate lined tray, add the broccoli and asparagus. Season with thyme, salt and the remaining garlic and onion powder. Drizzle with oil and toss to coat. Spread out the broccoli and asparagus in a single layer.



- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped, without stems
- 1 ½ cups edamame (if frozen, thawed)
- Salt
- Optional: spinach leaves, roasted chestnuts, slivered almonds, walnuts

Cook on the top rack for 12–15 minutes.

5. Remove the roasted garlic and smash into a paste with the back of a spoon. Add to a bowl with lemon zest and juice, yoghurt, oil, maple syrup, mustard and a pinch of salt. Mix together until creamy and well combined. Set aside.
6. In a large bowl add roasted potatoes, broccoli, asparagus, scallions, parsley and edamame. Pour half the dressing over and toss together. Add more dressing, if desired. Serve as a side or main meal.
7. Optional: Add spinach leaves for a bigger polyphenol hit and top the salad with roasted chestnuts, walnuts or slivered almonds.
8. Serve as a side or main meal — and don't be afraid to add leafy greens or nuts for an extra polyphenol boost.

Porridge and mixed berry compote (serves 2)

A comforting breakfast that combines fibre, colour, and flavour in one bowl.

Ingredients:

Berry compote

- 2 cups frozen mixed berries
- 50 ml fresh orange or lemon juice
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract
- 1 tbsp chia seeds
- ¼ tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp grated fresh ginger

Oats

- 1 cup oats
- 2 cups water or milk
- 2 tbsp flaxseed meal

Method:

Berry compote

1. Combine all ingredients, except chia seeds, in a saucepan on medium-low heat and allow to simmer for 5-10 minutes or until cooked to desired consistency.
2. Turn off the heat and add the chia seeds to the compote mixture. Mix well and let it rest for 5 minutes, ensuring the chia absorbs some of the liquid.

Porridge

1. Add all ingredients to a saucepan on low heat and stir until creamy.
2. Remove from heat when desired consistency is reached.
3. Transfer porridge to serving bowls and top with berry compote.
4. Drizzle honey and sprinkle cinnamon on top and enjoy!



Including a variety of polyphenol-rich foods in your meals may help nourish beneficial bacteria and support your gut microbiome. Everyone's gut is unique, so start with small, enjoyable changes and notice how your body responds. Over time, these colourful foods can become a simple part of your everyday routine.

