

Nutrition notes

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Pamela Allardice finds three things you didn't know about beetroot, and the problem with pizza.



3 things you didn't know about beetroot

- **It lowers blood pressure.** A Circulation study shows drinking beetroot juice decreases systolic blood pressure by up to five points in two hours.
- **It reduces inflammation.** Both the whole vegetable and its juice are a great source of betaine, a nutrients which is responsible for reducing several inflammatory markers in the body.
- **It improves muscle strength.** A study in Heart Failure showed that drinking beetroot juice boosted muscle power by up to 13 percent.

Pizza addict?

According to a University of Michigan study, foods high in fat, sugar, and refined carbs are associated with addictive-like behaviour, including cravings, 'overdosing' on larger amounts than intended, and failing to quit eating those foods. Pizza was the most addictive food, followed by chocolate and crisps.

Expert Q+A: Super power snacks



Unlike high-starch, empty-kilojoule snacks, these ones won't leave you hungry.

- Microgreens on wholegrain crackers - these tiny leaves contain five times the nutrients of regular veg.
- A smoothie of satiating pea protein, nut butter and coconut water, to provide omega 3, 6, and 9 EFAs and magnesium and calcium; it also balances electrolytes.
- Nori rolls filled with carrot, white radish, coriander, and drizzled with sesame paste provide an iodine fix for the thyroid.
- A handful of beetroot chips dipped in yoghurt mixed with a dash of curry powder delivers antioxidants and a fat-burning boost.
- Slice a banana in half lengthwise, grill for 5 minutes until brown on top, and drizzle with tahini for omega 6, calcium and magnesium.

Naturopath Teresa Mitchell-Paterson is a member of the Australian Traditional-Medicine Society. www.atms.com.au



Spotlight on ... apricots

Apricots contain beta-carotene which the body converts into vitamin A; this is essential for protecting against macular degeneration, and supporting immune function. Apricots are rich in vitamin C and lycopene, which prevent the build-up of fatty deposits on artery walls and are anti-carcinogenic. Apricots contain good amounts of catechins, potent phytonutrients that protect blood vessels from inflammation, plus potassium to stabilise blood pressure.

Jennifer Mathieson is a naturopath. www.hopewoodlifestyle.com.au



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Must-try this month: Sweet potato stuffed with butter beans, greens and black olives

- 4 large sweet potatoes, scrubbed clean
- olive oil, for rubbing the potatoes
- 40g butter
- 2 large garlic cloves, crushed
- pinch of dried chilli flakes
- 75g black olives
- 400g can butter beans, drained and rinsed
- 150g spring greens, sliced into thin strips
- juice and zest of 1 large unwaxed lemon
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- crème fraîche, to serve

Preheat oven to 180°C. Rub potatoes with a little oil, put on a tray and cook for 45-50 minutes until tender.

Roughly 15 minutes before potatoes are ready, start on the filling. Melt butter in a high-sided frying pan, add garlic and chilli and fry over medium heat for 1-2 minutes. Add olives and beans and stir. Finally, stir through the greens. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5-6 minutes.

Remove lid, season, squeeze over the lemon juice and stir through the zest. Cut potatoes in half lengthways and pinch each end to create a boat. Stuff with greens and serve with a dollop of crème fraîche.

Recipe from *Take One Veg* by Georgina Fuggle, published by Kyle Books; \$39.99. Photography © 2015 Tori Hancock



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