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The George Mateljan Foundation, a not-for-profit foundation with no commercial interests or advertising, is a new force for change to help make a healthier you and a healthier world.

eating healthy | cooking healthy | feeling great

## The World's Healthiest Foods

130 foods that can serve as the basis of your Healthiest Way of Eating. Links to the articles about these foods can be found below.

Of course, there are many other nutritious foods other than those that we have included on our list that we feel are wonderful, health-promoting foods; if there are other whole foods - such as fruits, vegetables, nuts/seeds, whole grains, etc - that you like, by all means enjoy them. Just because a food is not on our list doesn't mean that we don't think that it can be included in a diet geared towards the Healthiest Way of Eating as long as it is a whole, natural, nutrient-rich food.

To find out why some of your favorite nutritious foods are not included in our list, read [The Criteria Used to Select the World's Healthiest Foods](#).

### Vegetables

- [Asparagus](#)
- [Avocados](#)
- [Beets](#)
- [Bell peppers](#)
- [Broccoli](#)
- [Brussels sprouts](#)
- [Cabbage](#)
- [Carrots](#)
- [Cauliflower](#)
- [Celery](#)
- [Collard greens](#)
- [Cucumbers](#)
- [Eggplant](#)
- [Fennel](#)
- [Garlic](#)

### Fruits

- [Apples](#)
- [Apricots](#)
- [Bananas](#)
- [Blueberries](#)
- [Cantaloupe](#)
- [Cranberries](#)
- [Figs](#)
- [Grapefruit](#)
- [Grapes](#)
- [Kiwifruit](#)
- [Lemon/Limes](#)
- [Oranges](#)
- [Papaya](#)
- [Pears](#)
- [Pineapple](#)

### Nuts & Seeds

- [Almonds](#)
- [Cashews](#)
- [Flaxseeds](#)
- [Olive oil, extra virgin](#)
- [Peanuts](#)
- [Pumpkin seeds](#)
- [Sesame seeds](#)
- [Sunflower seeds](#)
- [Walnuts](#)

### Grains

- [Barley](#)
- [Brown rice](#)
- [Buckwheat](#)
- [Corn](#)

- Green beans
- Green peas
- Kale
- Leeks
- Mushrooms, crimini
- Mushrooms, shiitake
- Mustard greens
- Olives
- Onions
- Potatoes
- Romaine lettuce
- Sea vegetables
- Spinach
- Squash, summer
- Squash, winter
- Sweet potatoes
- Swiss chard
- Tomatoes
- Turnip greens
- Yams

## Seafood

- Cod
- Halibut
- Salmon
- Sardines
- Scallops
- Shrimp
- Tuna

- Plums
- Prunes
- Raisins
- Raspberries
- Strawberries
- Watermelon

## Eggs & Low-Fat Dairy

- Cheese, low-fat
- Eggs
- Milk, 2%, cow's
- Milk, goat
- Yogurt

## Beans & Legumes

- Black beans
- Dried peas
- Garbanzo beans (chickpeas)
- Kidney beans
- Lentils
- Lima beans
- Miso
- Navy beans
- Pinto beans
- Soybeans
- Tempeh
- Tofu

## Poultry & Lean Meats

- Beef, lean organic
- Calf's liver
- Chicken
- Lamb
- Turkey
- Venison

- Millet
- Oats
- Quinoa
- Rye
- Spelt
- Whole wheat

## Spices & Herbs

- Basil
- Black pepper
- Cayenne pepper
- Chili pepper, dried
- Cilantro/Coriander seeds
- Cinnamon, ground
- Cloves
- Cumin seeds
- Dill
- Ginger
- Mustard seeds
- Oregano
- Parsley
- Peppermint
- Rosemary
- Sage
- Thyme
- Turmeric

## Natural Sweeteners

- Blackstrap molasses
- Cane juice
- Honey
- Maple syrup

## Other

- Green tea
- Soy sauce (tamari)
- Water

# FAQs about the World's Healthiest Foods

# Criteria for The World's Healthiest Foods

Among the thousands of different foods our world provides, the majority contain at least several of the nutrients our bodies need but to be included as one of the World's Healthiest Foods they had to meet the criteria listed below.

The criteria we used will also help you understand why some of your favorite (and also nutritious) foods may not be included on our list. For example, Readers have asked why pomegranate, a very nutritious food, is not included on our website. While pomegranates taste great and are rich in vitamins and flavonoid phytonutrients, they are still rather expensive which makes them not as widely available to many people.

## 1. The World's Healthiest Foods are the Most Nutrient Dense

The World's Healthiest Foods have been selected because they are among the richest sources of many of the essential nutrients needed for optimal health. We used a concept called nutrient density to determine which foods have the highest nutritional value.

Nutrient density is a measure of the amount of nutrients a food contains in comparison to the number of calories. A food is more nutrient dense when the level of nutrients is high in relationship to the number of calories the food contains. By eating the World's Healthiest Foods, you'll get all the essential nutrients that you need for excellent health, including vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients, essential fatty acids, fiber and more for the least number of calories. Read more about [Our Food and Recipe Rating System](#).

## 2. The World's Healthiest Foods are Whole Foods

The World's Healthiest Foods are also whole foods complete with all their rich natural endowment of nutrients. They have not been highly processed nor do they contain synthetic, artificial or irradiated ingredients. And whenever possible, The Healthier Way of Eating recommends purchasing "Organically Grown" foods, since they not only promote your health, but also the health of our planet.

## 3. The World's Healthiest Foods are Familiar Foods

The World's Healthiest Foods are common "everyday" foods. These include the fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, lean meats, fish, olive oil, herbs and spices that are familiar to most people.

## 4. The World's Healthiest Foods are Readily Available

Although there are many foods that are exceptionally nutritious, many of them are not readily available in different areas of the country. The World's Healthiest Foods are foods that the majority people can easily find at their local market.

## 5. The World's Healthiest Foods are Affordable

We have selected foods that are not only familiar and available, but also affordable, especially if you purchase them locally and in season. This is also the time when they are the freshest and of the best quality.

## 6. The World's Healthiest Foods Taste Good

The World's Healthiest Foods are also some of the world's best tasting foods. We have created recipes using the World's Healthiest Foods that do not overpower, but enhance, the unique flavor of each food. Each recipe provides a flavor adventure so you can discover new ways to experience and enjoy the great natural tastes of these foods.



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