

BRAIN FOOD

8 Superfoods Your Brain Will Love



Brain Food: 8 Superfoods Your Brain Will Love

Written by Ocean Robbins

Contributions from Carly Verble, John Robbins, Michael Carwile,
and the rest of the Food Revolution Network Team

Cover design by Alysha Vandergriff



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Dementia has become a global epidemic. Today, there are 47 million people living with dementia worldwide, and that number is expected to grow to 73 million by 2030.^{[1][2]}

According to an international survey conducted by the Alzheimer's Association, Alzheimer's disease is the most feared disease after cancer. Of those surveyed, almost 40% incorrectly believed you have to have a family history to be at risk for Alzheimer's.^[3]

If you're over 40, the groundwork for dementia may already be in place in your brain. Researchers have found that the pathways for Alzheimer's often start **30 years** before the onset of symptoms, and that nearly half of seniors over age 85 die with dementia.^{[4][5]}

Fortunately, you can do something about all this.

There are clear, scientifically proven steps you can take that will radically increase your chances of adding life to your years.

And it all starts with food.

According to Drs. Dean and Ayesha Sherzai, MD, co-directors of the Brain Health and Alzheimer's Prevention Program at Loma Linda University, and speakers in the Food Revolution Summit, over 90% of Alzheimer's

cases can be prevented with simple changes to diet and lifestyle.^[6]

90%!

A lot of attention has been paid – and money spent – on pharmaceutical drugs, supplements and exotic “superfoods,” but the real superfoods turn out to be remarkably accessible and affordable.

The foods that can make the biggest difference to the greatest number of people offer critical minerals, vitamins, antioxidants, flavonoids, polyphenols, and a host of other important phytonutrients that are good for your brain. They don't just fight Alzheimer's in the long term - they also support your memory and your mental function starting right away.



We put together this list of the top eight superfoods that have been found to provide brain-boosting benefits. Recent studies have shown some of these superfoods can be critical to the prevention and in some cases reversal of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. Read on to learn what they are and how you can add them to your diet.

Bon appétit!

1) Turmeric

Turmeric has been popular in India for more than 5,000 years, and is widely thought to be one of the primary reasons why both India's rural and urban populations have among the lowest rates of Alzheimer's disease in the world.^{[7][8]} The plant's orange color comes from a polyphenol (a micronutrient with antioxidant activity) called curcumin, which, as it turns out, is something of a miracle compound.^[9]

Many studies have demonstrated curcumin's ability to prevent or even help to reverse the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease, as well as other forms of dementia.^[10] Curcumin may also help aging blood vessels to relax and increase blood flow to the brain.^[11]

Enjoy Turmeric:

Turmeric is a flavorful addition to sauces, curries, stir-fries, and casseroles.

But, you'll get better curcumin absorption if you combine turmeric with some black pepper and a bit of (healthy) fat.^[12] Enjoy it often in as many ways as you can.

And if you're looking for the optimal way to absorb the curcuminoids in turmeric, consider this: Researchers recently discovered how to

use micelles to fuel a 185x bioavailability breakthrough.

PuraTHRIVE, a company Food Revolution Network has vetted and works with, was the first company to put micelle curcumin (combined with ginger oil and vegan DHA) in a bottle.

They love our mission and contribute a portion of their sales to Food Revolution Network. If you're interested, you can find out more at turmeric4health.com.^[13]



2) Blueberries

The science illustrating a major link between blueberries and brain health is extensive. They're rich in antioxidant compounds known as anthocyanins, which have been shown to improve brain function.^[14]

A study published in *The Annals of Neurology* analyzed data from 16,000 women with an average age of 74, and found that the women with the highest levels of blueberry consumption delayed their cognitive aging by as much as 2½ years.^[15]

In a study with 9 elderly human participants, a team at the University of Cincinnati found that, compared to a comparable group that was given a placebo, participants who were given blueberry juice scored higher on memory tests, had improved word list recall, and experienced lower depressive symptoms.^[16]

And by the way, while blueberries might be the dementia-fighting champions of the berry universe, they're not the only beneficial berries.

In fact, berries of all types, including strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, and all the rest, bring you critical minerals, vitamins, antioxidants, flavonoids, polyphenols, and a host of other important phytonutrients that are good for your brain, your heart, and your overall health.

Enjoy Blueberries:

When they're in season, you can enjoy blueberries fresh. Out of season, you can easily find them frozen or dried.

You can also add blueberries to salads, breakfast cereals, or smoothies. Or simply eat them by the handful.



3) Greens

Greens — especially cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage, kale, collards, and Brussels sprouts — are rich in nutrients that benefit brain health. In 2015, researchers at Rush University in Chicago evaluated the diet and mental function of 950 elderly people.

After adjusting for variables such as education, exercise and family history of dementia, the researchers found that those participants who ate leafy green vegetables, such as spinach and kale, once or twice a day experienced significantly less cognitive decline than those who didn't. In fact, **participants who ate greens halted their mental decline by an average of 11 years.**^[17]

In another study published in *The Annals of Neurology*, researchers tracked the diet and lifestyle choices of 13,388 women over the course of 29 years. These women were given a series of tests measuring their cognitive function. Cognitive function in women with the highest consumption of cruciferous vegetables declined less than women who ate less of these vegetables.^[18]

Enjoy Greens:

Green vegetables can be enjoyed raw as a salad, and can also be steamed, baked, dehydrated into chips, used as a wrap – even broiled.



4) Coffee

If you greet the morning with the aroma of freshly brewing coffee, you're enjoying a pleasure shared by billions of people worldwide.

Until recently, you wouldn't have expected to see coffee listed as a health food. For decades we've been advised to drink less of it. But it turns out that much of that advice is debatable.

In fact, there's a lot of evidence that coffee brings some significant benefits (though definitely not for everyone).

For one thing, coffee is a vasodilator, meaning it causes blood vessels to expand, which is good for your circulation. And it seems to have a particular effect on the blood vessels that feed your brain—making it an ally in the fight against all forms of dementia.

The Cardiovascular Risk Factors, Aging and Dementia study tracked more than 1,500 randomly selected Finnish people for 21 years, examining a broad range of diet and lifestyle choices and how they correlated with health outcomes. The study found that when people at midlife drank 3-5 cups of coffee per day (which sounds like a lot!), they had as they grew older, compared to non-coffee drinkers, a 65% decreased risk of dementia.^[19]

A 13-year study of more than 80,000 Japanese adults found those who drank at least one cup of coffee per day had a

20% reduced risk of stroke.^[20] And in another study, 34,670 women in Sweden were tracked for more than 10 years. Those who did not drink any coffee were at elevated risk of stroke, while the women who drank at least one cup per day reduced their risk of stroke by 22 to 25%.^[21] Coffee consumption has also been shown to be good for your reaction time, memory, vigilance, and general cognitive function.^[22]

For all its benefits, coffee isn't for everybody. Caffeine makes some people jittery, anxious, and restless. And it can become addictive. Many consistent coffee drinkers find that if they miss more than a day or two, they get headaches and feel miserable.^[23]

If you tend to be lethargic, coffee can make life brighter. For many people, it feels like an "on switch" to start their day.

But if you're someone who tends to be hyper-stimulated, and whose adrenals can run on overdrive, coffee might add more stress than joy to your life.

As in all things, listen to your body, and see what you discover.



Pregnant women take note

Fetuses are highly sensitive to caffeine so it may be best to avoid it during pregnancy.^[24] Also, coffee that comes packed with sugar, artificial flavorings, factory farmed milk, and high fructose corn syrup may not be a net benefit to anyone's health, especially unborn babies.^[25]

But what about decaf?

Unfortunately, few studies exist on the health effects of decaffeinated coffee. But there are studies telling us decaffeinated coffee has about 75% of the antioxidants of the caffeinated version.^[26]

Dr. Gary Wenk, a Professor of Psychology & Neuroscience & Molecular Virology, Immunology and Medical Genetics at the Ohio State University and Medical Center, is a leading authority on chronic brain inflammation and Alzheimer's disease. He writes: "With or without the caffeine, coffee is rich in biologically active substances. So drink up and enjoy a good night's sleep with the knowledge that your cup of decaf is effectively protecting your brain and body."

According to Dr. Wenk, whether caffeinated or not, coffee is rich in many phenols and other antioxidants including caffeic acid, chlorogenic acid, quinides, trigonelline, and ferulic acid, all of which have potent health-boosting benefits. Ferulic acid may be the most beneficial

compound of all — it can decrease blood glucose levels, reduce the level of cholesterol and triglycerides, and is a potent anti-inflammatory that Dr. Wenk's own laboratory has shown is capable of significantly reducing brain inflammation that is thought to underlie the risk of Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease.^[27]

Enjoy Coffee Responsibly:

Because coffee accounts for almost half of the total exports from tropical countries, coffee production has a massive impact on the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of millions of families and farmers.^[28]

Regrettably, many of them are living in poverty. Therefore, the kinds of coffee we choose have a profound impact on the kind of world we shape for future generations. Fair trade, shade grown, and organic coffee are the types to reach for if you want to help to shape a fairer and healthier world.



5) Tea

The story of tea begins in China. According to legend, in 2737 BC, the Chinese Emperor Shen Nung, a renowned herbalist, was sitting beneath a tree while his servant boiled drinking water. Some leaves from the tree blew into the water, and emperor Shen Nung decided to try the infusion his servant had accidentally created. And thus the Emperor enjoyed the first teatime in the history of the world.

It would take another several thousand years before tea became the national drink of China—around the year 700 AD.

Today, next to water, tea is the most widely consumed beverage in the world. (Yes, even ahead of Coca-Cola.) Yet we're only now discovering how powerful tea really is.

There are four types of tea: white, green, oolong, and black. All of these can be derived from the same plant. Of the four types of tea, white and green are the least processed. They have the highest levels of antioxidants, and the lowest levels of caffeine.

Tea consumption has been linked to reduced rates of Alzheimer's Disease.^[29] Of course, unless it's been decaffeinated, tea has caffeine. As mentioned above with coffee, the health effects of caffeine are a controversial topic. But

in moderation, a considerable body of evidence shows that tea may be good for increasing your memory.^[30] While all types of tea have potent brain-boosting powers, green and white tea have the highest levels of beneficial antioxidants.

Enjoy Tea:

If you're going to buy pre-bottled tea, it's best to check the label to be sure it's either unsweetened or only lightly sweetened. And if you brew it yourself, try it plain, or with a squeeze of lemon and/or a dab of sweetener. Enjoy teatime!



6) Legumes

In 2004, researchers from Japan, Sweden, Greece, and Australia teamed up for a fascinating study.

They wanted to see if there was any one food group that was consistently linked with a longer lifespan in every nation and group. And they found one.

Legumes.

Whether it was the Swedes dining on brown beans and peas, the Japanese eating soy, or Mediterraneans enjoying chickpeas, lentils, and white beans, one thing was clear. The more legumes people ate, the longer they lived.

As the researchers looked at data across all the populations combined, legumes were the food that showed up with the most plausible, consistent, and statistically significant results.

Over the course of the study, every 20-gram (two tablespoons) increase in daily legume consumption was correlated with an 8% reduction in risk of death.^[31]

The legume family includes thousands of colorful varieties of beans, peas, lentils, soybeans, and even peanuts. They grow in pods, and like nuts and seeds, each legume has the potential to sprout and grow

into a new plant.

Legumes contain folate, iron, magnesium and potassium, which can help with general body function and also with neuron firing.

They figure prominently in most Alzheimer's prevention diets. They also contain choline, a B-vitamin that boosts acetylcholine (a neurotransmitter critical for brain function).^[32]





Enjoy Legumes:

Add a serving of legumes a few times a week (you can soak and then cook dry beans, or even just take them from a can) to your menu, and you'll be reaping some health-giving benefits. Worried about flatulence?

The compounds in legumes most likely to cause gas are the oligosaccharides that can't be broken down before they reach the colon.

Because the oligosaccharides arrive in the colon relatively undigested, they are fermented by bacteria, which can result in intestinal gas.

You can bring down levels of the offending oligosaccharides dramatically by soaking your legumes well, rinsing them every twelve or so hours.

You can soak beans for 48 hours. For lentils and split peas, 8-12 hours will do.

Over the course of a couple days, legumes can begin to germinate, which changes their composition and increases digestibility. You're actually beginning the sprouting process.

Rinse your legumes one final time before putting them in a pressure cooker and covering them with plenty of fresh water (it should reach at least 2" (5 cm), above the legumes themselves).

Add a piece of kombu, about 4" (10 cm) long, to the pot (kombu, an edible seaweed, has a unique ability to neutralize any remaining gas-producing compounds in beans).

Cook your legumes until they're tender—and enjoy them!

7) Omega-3 Fatty Acids

There are three types of Omega-3 fatty acids—ALA (alpha-linolenic acid), EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid), and DHA (docosahexaenoic acid).

All three are critical to human health. DHA, in particular, is a major structural fat in the human brain and eyes, representing about 97% of all Omega-3 fats in the brain and 93% of all Omega-3 fats in the retina.^[33] It's a major structural component of the cerebral cortex — the part of the brain responsible for memory, language, creativity, emotion, and attention.^[34]

Having adequate levels of DHA can protect you from age-related mental decline, and significantly reduce your risk of dementia and Alzheimer's. Seniors with higher levels of DHA are 47% less likely to develop dementia and 39% less likely to develop Alzheimer's compared with seniors who have low levels.^[35]

People whose diets contain daily Omega-3's have also been shown to have a 26% lower risk of having brain lesions that cause dementia compared with those who do not.^[36]

These fatty acids help your brain to stay in top shape.

While ALA is found in some plant foods, EPA and DHA are found mainly in fish and certain algae. The human body can convert ALA to EPA and DHA, although the efficiency of conversion varies from person to person.^[37] Some people may do just fine if they eat plenty

of ALA. Others seem to benefit from some direct form of DHA or EPA—whether from fish, a fish oil supplement, or an algae-based supplement.^[38]

The plant foods highest in ALA are flax seeds and chia seeds. Walnuts and hemp seeds are also sources. EPA and DHA are found in salmon, anchovies, herring, sardines, and some other fatty fish—as well as in some forms of algae.

If you choose to eat fish, you do need to look out for mercury and heavy metal contamination. Wild salmon, sardines, and herring are all fish that are high in Omega-3's and relatively low in contamination.^[39] Watch out for farmed salmon, though—it often has much higher levels of mercury and heavy metals.^[40] Some people also prefer to take molecularly distilled fish oil supplements.

Many people are also concerned about the ethics of eating fish—



including the fact that the oceans are being devastated by overfishing, and the reality that a growing share of the global fish supply comes from cruel and unsustainable fish farms.^[41]

If you choose not to eat fish, whether for health, ethical or environmental reasons, it's almost certainly best for you to incorporate abundant ALA Omega-3s into your diet (especially featuring ground chia and/or flax seeds on a regular basis), and most experts would agree that you should probably take an algal DHA supplement, too. For pregnant women, especially, some form of direct DHA consumption is very strongly recommended.^[42]

Enjoy Omega-3 Fatty Acids:

While flax oil is high in omega-3 fatty acids, the whole flax seed delivers not only ALA, but also highly nutritious lignans and fiber.^[43] But you do need to grind it up first or it will likely pass straight through your digestive tract and come out whole on the other end.

You can get a dedicated coffee grinder to make your own fresh flax meal – or buy it ground, and keep it in the freezer because the oils are highly perishable. Chia seeds are delicious made into puddings, added to smoothies and juices, or sprinkled on a salad.

If you decide to take a supplement how

much do you need? There's no official recommendation, but most experts suggest a minimum of 250-500 mg of combined EPA and DHA each day for healthy adults.^[44] One source to consider is Complement—they make an algae-sourced DHA+EPA supplement that also includes B12 and vitamin D3. Like PuraTHRIVE, they love and support our mission. They also contribute a share of sales to support the mission of Food Revolution Network. You can find out more at foodrevolution.org/complement.



8) Red Grapes

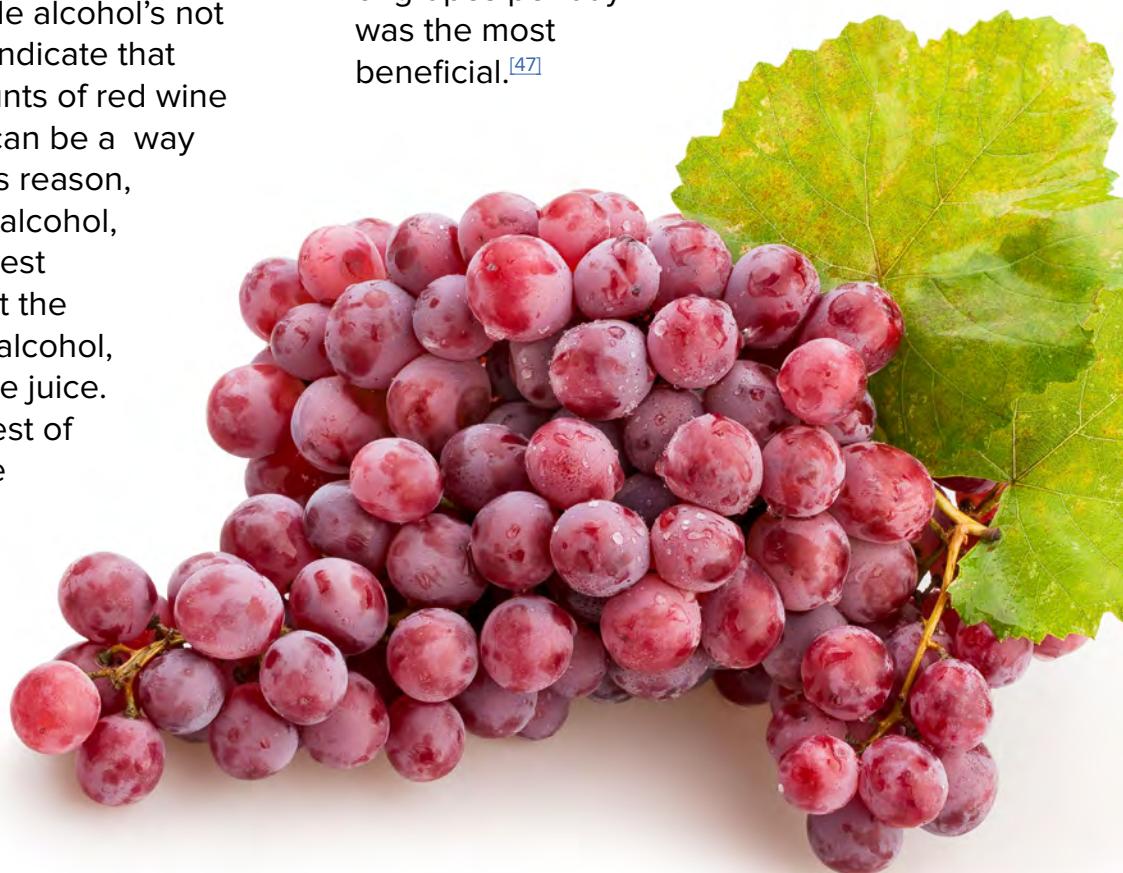
Red grapes contain resveratrol, a polyphenol which reduces the levels of amyloid-beta peptides in patients with Alzheimer's disease. Studies have also shown grapes can enhance brain health and delay the onset of degenerative neural diseases. According to one study published in the British Journal of Nutrition, grape juice can even improve the brain function of older people who have already displayed mild cognitive impairment.^[45]

Enjoy Red Grapes:

Eat red grapes (especially muscadine grapes, which have the highest resveratrol levels found in nature). While alcohol's not great for anybody, studies indicate that consuming moderate amounts of red wine (5 ounces or less per day) can be a way to enjoy resveratrol. For this reason, if you're going to consume alcohol, red wine is probably your best option. But you can also get the same benefits, without the alcohol, simply by drinking red grape juice. And eating red grapes is best of all, because it gives you the fiber and other nutrients from the whole grape!

And here's something you may not know about resveratrol. It turns out that organic agriculture could matter, too. This is because resveratrol is produced as a protectant against potential invaders like molds and fungi. When modern pesticides and fungicides are applied, less resveratrol is required to protect the plant – so less is produced. That's why resveratrol levels seem to be highest in organically grown red grapes.^[46]

To get the most out of this brain-protecting superfood, one study found eating the equivalent of 2½ cups of grapes per day was the most beneficial.^[47]



Brain-Boosting Superfoods Checklist

Alzheimer's Disease & Dementia

- Turmeric



- Tea



- Omega-3 Fatty Acids



- Red Grapes



Improves Cognitive Function

- Coffee



- Blueberries



- Greens



- Legumes



- Red Grapes



Improves Memory

- Coffee



- Blueberries



- Tea



Protects from Mental Decline

- Omega-3 Fatty Acids



Reduces Risk of Stroke

- Coffee



Brain-Boosting Recipes

The following recipes are provided by Dr. Dean and Dr. Ayesha Sherzai. Food Revolution Network is pleased to host Drs. Sherzai as speakers in the Food Revolution Summit (foodrevolutionsummit.org).

A unique husband and wife team on the cutting edge of brain science, Dr. Dean and Dr. Ayesha Sherzai are dedicated to educating people on the simple steps to long-term health and wellness through their work as Directors of the Alzheimer's Prevention Program at Loma Linda University Medical Center; with patients; as well as through online writing, videos, and books.

For more information on brain health, visit TeamSherzai.com.

Wherever possible, it is best to use organic ingredients for these recipes.

Pesto Bean Soup with Spinach and Pine Nuts

This Pesto Bean Soup will ignite your brain and warm your soul on a cold day! Cauliflower is blended to make a creamy base and beans add nourishing clean protein.

Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients

- 1 tsp extra virgin olive oil (or water if you're oil-free)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 1 head of cauliflower, trimmed and cut into florets
- 1 bay leaf
- 1½ cups loosely packed basil leaves, destemmed
- 3 handfuls (about 3 cups) fresh spinach
- 2 (15 ounce) cans Great Northern Beans or cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
- freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- salt to taste

Garnish

- basil leaf cut in thin strips (optional)
- toasted pine nuts (mandatory!)

Instructions

Place a large stock pot over medium-low heat and add the oil (or water).

Add the garlic and sauté for 30 seconds until translucent, but not browned (overcooked garlic will give a bitter taste to the soup. Discard if the garlic is browned and start all over).

Add the broth, cauliflower and bay leaf.

Cover the pot and bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Allow to cook for 10-15 minutes until the cauliflower is very tender.

Remove the bay leaf and add the basil, and remove the pot from the heat. Carefully ladle soup into a blender in batches to purée to a very smooth



and creamy consistency. Optionally, an immersion blender works well too.

Return the pot to medium heat.

Add the spinach, beans, and black pepper. Cook for about 5-7 minutes until the spinach is wilted and the beans are heated through.

Just before serving, add the lemon juice and stir. Adjust taste by adding salt and pepper.

Serve garnished with basil leaf strips and toasted pine nuts.

Brain Boost Blueberry Crisp

This scrumptious dessert is completely guilt-free. We all know about the incredible antioxidant properties of blueberries, and the crust is made of nuts high in omega-3s.

These powerful ingredients combine to offer you not only a delightful dessert but also nature's best medicine for a healthy brain.

Yield: 6 servings

Ingredients

- 5 cups fresh blueberries, or mixed berries (raspberries, blueberries, blackberries, and strawberries; if using strawberries, chop them)
- 1 cup rolled oats
- ½ cup almond meal
- ½ cup walnuts, finely chopped into almost meal
- ½ cup dates, soaked in hot water and blended into a puree
- ½ cup erythritol
- ½ cup pecans, roughly chopped
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ cup unsalted almond butter

Instructions

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Place the washed berries in a deep 9 × 13 (or similar size) baking dish.

In a bowl, add all topping ingredients.



Stir to combine, then use fingers to break apart any clumps. Pour over berries in an even layer.

Bake for 45 to 50 minutes (uncovered), or until the filling is bubbly and the topping is deep golden brown. Let rest at least 30 minutes before serving.

This dessert tastes best when fresh but can be frozen for up to two weeks.

Reheat at 350°F until warmed through.

Black Bean Tacos with Cashew Cream Sauce

These black bean tacos are bursting with clean protein, fiber, and minerals. The out-of-this-world cashew Queso Blanco is chock-full of good fats (monounsaturated fats), vitamin E, K, B6, and lots of minerals like magnesium, selenium, iron and zinc. And what's not good about avocados? It's a great source of monounsaturated fats, omega-3 fats, lutein, and beta carotene. The salsa and the cilantro add an extra boost of anti-inflammatory foods that allows your brain to heal. You can totally make this oil-free! Just skip the olive oil. This recipe is like a big hug for your brain.

Yield: 3-4 servings

Queso Blanco Ingredients

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup cashews, soaked for 4-6 hours (or overnight), then drained
- 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup vegetable broth
- 3 tbsp nutritional yeast
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 tsp cumin
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp salt
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 tsp extra virgin olive oil (or water if you're oil-free)
- 1 small onion, about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped
- 1 or 2 small jalapeños, chopped and seeded (1 for milder heat)

Other Ingredients

- 2 cups black beans, or 1 (15 ounce) can, rinsed and drained
- 6-8 corn tortillas



Garnish

- Salsa
- Guacamole
- Cilantro
- Lime
- Jalapeno slices

Instructions

First make the Queso Blanco. Place the cashews, broth, nutritional yeast, garlic, cumin, salt and lemon juice in a high power blender. Blend until very smooth. In a medium pan over medium-low heat, pour the oil (or water) and add the onion and jalapeños. Sauté for 3 minutes until the onions are softened and fragrant. Then pour the content of the blender over the onions and jalapeños in the pan, and mix well with a spatula. Continue stirring constantly, scraping the sides of the pan, to warm the sauce through. After about 3 minutes, turn off the heat.

Meanwhile, heat the tortillas. Stack them on a microwave-safe plate and cover with a damp paper towel. Microwave in 30-second bursts until warm. Assemble by filling the tortillas with black beans, and pouring the sauce over them. Top with salsa, guacamole, cilantro, lime and jalapeño slices, as desired.

Join the Food Revolution Summit



We are John and Ocean Robbins, a father and son team that founded Food Revolution Network to empower YOU with cutting edge, must-have information about the most critical diet and health related issues of our times.

We want a health industry that acts like food matters. We want a food industry that acts like health matters. And we want government policy that looks out for the wellbeing of we, the people.

Most of all, we want you to be informed, so you can make healthy choices for yourself, your loved ones, and your planet.

That's why we're so excited to bring you the Food Revolution Summit.

Dare to discover the most cutting-edge information, startling facts, and inspirational wisdom that will heal you and have you CELEBRATING LIFE! (For FREE and without having to leave home.)

We'll personally interview 24 of the world's most respected food experts and activists in a week-long "virtual summit." These visionaries have inspired hundreds of millions of people and changed the way we think about food. You'll have direct access to 3

highly focused 45-ish minute interviews - personally conducted by John Robbins – every day for a week. You can listen via phone (conference call), or over the Internet. Between every interview, Ocean Robbins shares top tips and takeaways, answers live questions, and gives away special prizes.

Here's what's in it for you. You'll get...

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- Timely cutting-edge answers to your burning questions.
- Tools for talking with your family and peers.
- Inspiration, useful insights, ideas, motivation and new understanding.
- A deepened relationship with the food you love!

When voices are rising up everywhere to preserve access to safe and healthy food, it's never been more important to roll up your sleeves, get involved, listen and be heard.

Please join us and invite your friends and family along!

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Endnotes

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