

Feed Your Brain, Nourish Your Mind

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Delicious Recipes and Meal Ideas
Inspired by the Mediterranean Diet



Good nutrition can help to improve the health of your brain and overall mental health.

Registered dietitians are your partners in the kitchen, showing you ways to enjoy delicious, nutritious and satisfying meals.

In this handy booklet, you'll find:

- **simple dietitian-designed recipes** featuring nutrient-rich foods your brain needs to stay healthy;
- **inspiring meal ideas** to spark your creativity in the kitchen and boost your intake of some of the top brain-healthy foods; and
- **useful nutrition tips** and a handy food list to guide you in making nourishing food choices.

The recipes and meal ideas in this e-booklet focus on nutrient-rich foods that are staples in a Mediterranean-style diet which has been linked to optimal brain health and mental health.

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THINK BIG PICTURE

No one food or single nutrient will make or break your brain health or your mental health. It's your overall eating pattern — the foods you eat over time — that really matters. Choose a variety of nourishing foods every day.



Steakhouse Skewers

with Kale Caesar Salad

TOTAL TIME: 45 mins

MAKES: 4 servings

You'll love this flavour-packed meal! The tasty beef-veggie skewers pair well with the leafy greens tossed in a lemony Caesar salad dressing made with creamy silken tofu. Serve with whole grain garlic toast, if desired.

INGREDIENTS

Salad

- 1 pkg (150g) soft (silken) tofu (approx. $\frac{3}{4}$ cup / 175 mL)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (60 mL) olive oil
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) lemon juice
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp (5 mL) **each** Dijon mustard and Worcestershire sauce
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 anchovy filets, chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp (1 mL) **each** salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 6 cups (1.5 L) shredded kale
- 4 cups (1 L) torn Romaine lettuce

Skewers

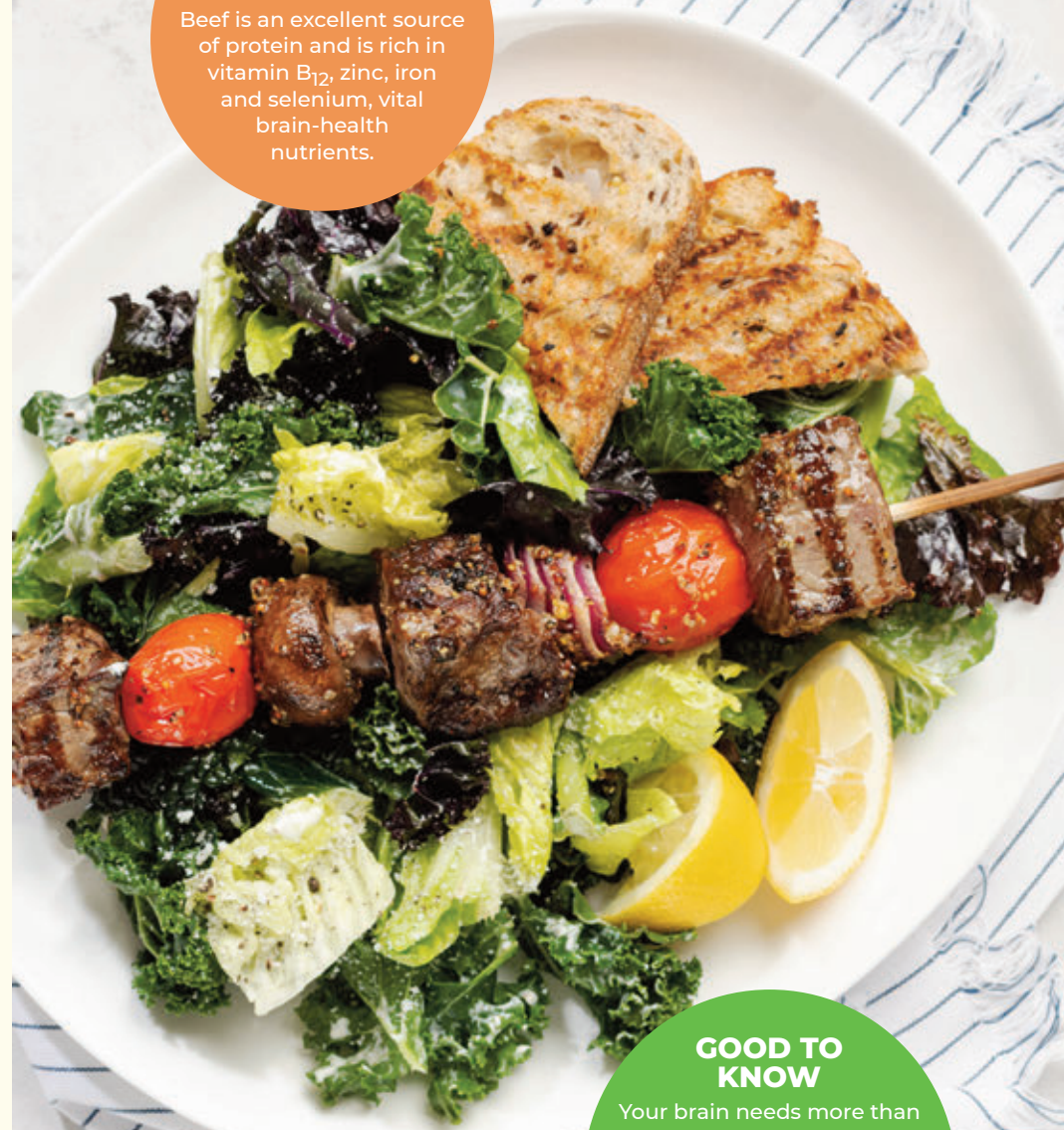
- $\frac{3}{4}$ lb (375g) Beef Kabob cubes or Grilling Steak (e.g., Top Sirloin or Strip Loin), cut into 1-inch cubes
- 12 cremini or button mushrooms
- 12 cherry or grape tomatoes
- 1 small red onion, cut into chunks
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) **each** olive oil and grainy Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) Montreal steak spice

DIRECTIONS

- Salad:** Place tofu, olive oil, Parmesan cheese, lemon juice, vinegar, mustard, Worcestershire sauce, garlic, anchovies, salt, and pepper in a blender. Blend until smooth and well combined. Toss $\frac{3}{4}$ cup dressing with kale (reserve remainder). Cover and chill for 30 minutes.
- Skewers:** Preheat grill to medium-high heat; grease grate well. Alternate threading steak, mushrooms, tomatoes, and onion onto four soaked wooden or metal skewers. Whisk olive oil with mustard and steak spice; brush over skewers. Grill, turning at least twice, for 8 to 10 minutes for medium-rare doneness.
- Add romaine lettuce and remaining dressing to kale salad. Toss to combine well. Divide salad evenly among 4 plates and top with skewers.

NUTRIENT BOOST

Beef is an excellent source of protein and is rich in vitamin B₁₂, zinc, iron and selenium, vital brain-health nutrients.



GOOD TO KNOW

Your brain needs more than 40 nutrients every day. Eating a mix of both plant and animal foods helps you to get those nutrients, and this hearty salad is a fabulous way to do that!

PEI Mussels

with Fire Roasted Tomato Sauce

TOTAL TIME: 15 mins

MAKES: 2 servings

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Simple to prepare, delicious and an affordable seafood option, mussels make an easy weeknight meal. Enjoy with a leafy green salad and your favourite whole grain, such as brown rice, to soak up the garlicky tomato broth. Dinner's ready in fewer than 20 minutes!

INGREDIENTS

2 lb (900 grams) PEI mussels, de-bearded, cleaned and towel-dried
1 tbsp (15 mL) olive oil
1 onion, chopped
1 tbsp (15 mL) minced garlic
1 can (398 mL) fire-roasted tomatoes, with juices
½ cup (125 mL) reduced-sodium chicken broth
sea salt & freshly cracked black pepper, to taste
½ cup (125 mL) fresh basil, chopped

DIRECTIONS

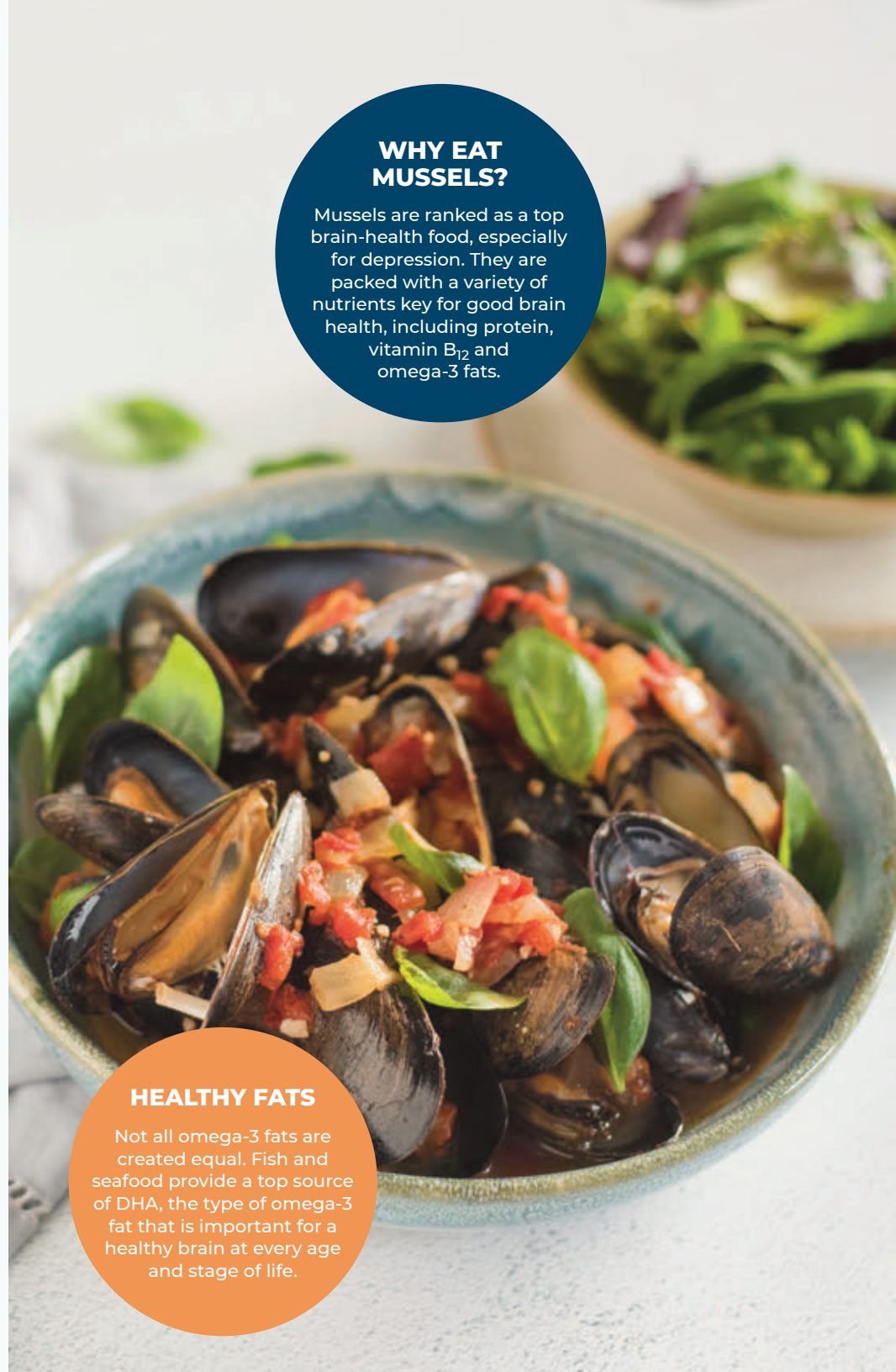
1. In a large heavy skillet, heat olive oil on medium-high heat. Add onion and sauté until translucent, about 3 minutes. Add garlic and sauté for 1 minute, until garlic is softened.
2. Add canned tomatoes with juices and broth. Stir to combine. Add mussels, stir to coat, and cover with lid. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 5-7 minutes until mussels open.
3. Remove from heat, discard any unopened mussels, add salt and pepper to taste and serve garnished with fresh basil.

WHY EAT MUSSELS?

Mussels are ranked as a top brain-health food, especially for depression. They are packed with a variety of nutrients key for good brain health, including protein, vitamin B₁₂ and omega-3 fats.

HEALTHY FATS

Not all omega-3 fats are created equal. Fish and seafood provide a top source of DHA, the type of omega-3 fat that is important for a healthy brain at every age and stage of life.



Greek-Inspired Power Bowl

with Tangy Dressing

TOTAL TIME: 20 mins

MAKES: 4 servings

This veggie-packed bowl topped with an egg is a balanced meal that's ready in a jiffy. And the tangy dressing adds a burst of fresh flavour. Be flexible! Check out the ingredient swaps so you can enjoy this bowl your way.

INGREDIENTS

Dressing

- ¼ cup (60 mL) olive oil
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) red wine vinegar
- ½ tsp (2 mL) Dijon mustard
- ½ tsp (2 mL) dried oregano
- 1 small clove garlic, pressed
- ¼ tsp (1 mL) **each** salt and pepper

Power Bowl

- 4 eggs or omega-3 enriched eggs
- 2 cups (500 mL) halved grape tomatoes or chopped red pepper
- 2 cups (500 mL) quartered and sliced English cucumber
- 2 cups (500 mL) baby spinach or arugula
- 1 can (398 mL) no salt added chickpeas or lentils, drained and rinsed
- 1 ½ cups (325 mL) cooked pot barley or quinoa
- ¼ cup (60 mL) cup chopped flat leaf parsley
- ¼ cup (60 mL) diced red onion
- ¼ cup (60 mL) sliced kalamata olives
- ¼ cup (60 mL) crumbled feta cheese (optional)

DIRECTIONS

1. Put eggs in a small pot; add cold water to cover eggs by about 1-inch (2.5 cm). Cover and bring to a boil over high heat. As soon as the water reaches a boil, remove pot from heat; let stand for 4–6 minutes for soft-cooked eggs or 10–12 minutes for hard-cooked eggs. Drain and rinse under cold water; peel and halve eggs.

2. **Dressing:** In a small bowl, whisk together oil, vinegar, mustard, oregano, garlic, salt, and pepper.

3. **Power bowls:** Equally divide tomatoes, cucumber, baby spinach, chickpeas, and barley among 4 bowls. Top each bowl with two egg halves. Sprinkle with parsley, red onion, olives, and feta cheese (if desired). Drizzle on dressing and enjoy!

EGG-CELLENT!

Eggs are one of the best sources of choline, a vitamin-like nutrient that's crucial for good brain health, supporting memory and mood. Two eggs provide you with 50% of the daily value for choline.

WHY OLIVE OIL?

Olive oil is a daily staple in the Mediterranean diet. And research suggests the potential brain-health benefits come from the polyphenols, a natural plant compound.



Tuscan White Bean and Greens Soup

TOTAL TIME: 40 mins

MAKES: 6 servings

This recipe is scrumptious, and you'll love the leftovers! The white beans make it hearty enough for a meal, and adding Swiss chard is a great way to pack more leafy greens into your day. This soup works well with kale or mustard greens too.

INGREDIENTS

- 3 tbsp (45 mL) olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 cup (250 mL) chopped carrots
- 1 cup (250 mL) chopped celery
- 1 tsp (5 mL) dried oregano
- ½ tsp (2 mL) **each** salt and pepper
- 4 large cloves garlic, minced
- pinch crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 cartons (900 mL each) reduced-sodium vegetable broth
- 2 cups (500 mL) no salt added diced tomatoes (with juice)
- 2 cans (540 mL each) white kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 8 cups (2 L) chopped Swiss chard (about 1 bunch), finely chop the stalks, and set aside
- 1 cup (250 mL) chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) lemon juice
- ½ cup (125 mL) fresh basil leaves (optional)

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat olive oil in a large pot over medium-low heat. Add onions, carrots, celery, oregano, salt, and pepper. Cook for about 8 minutes until onions are translucent. Add garlic and red pepper flakes; cook, stirring for about 1 minute or until garlic is softened.
2. Add broth, tomatoes, and Swiss chard stalks; cover and bring to boil over high heat. Reduce heat and simmer until vegetables are tender, about 8 minutes.
3. In a medium bowl, coarsely mash half of the beans with a masher or fork. Add whole and mashed beans, Swiss chard leaves and parsley to the pot. Return heat to medium, bring soup back to a simmer and cook uncovered, stirring occasionally, until Swiss chard is wilted, about 3 minutes.
4. Stir in lemon juice and basil (if desired). Ladle soup into bowls.

HEALTHY GUT, HEALTHY MIND

Keep your gut healthy by eating a wide variety of fibre-rich foods every day, such as the leafy greens and white beans in this soup. Bonus? A healthy gut is also linked with brain-health benefits.

GO GREEN!

Leafy greens, like the Swiss chard in this soup, contain the antioxidants beta-carotene, lutein and zeaxanthin, nutrients linked with better brain health.



Easy Veggie, Tuna & Barley Salad

TOTAL TIME: 40 mins

MAKES: 6 servings

Looking for a new way to enjoy tuna? This meal pairs tuna with lots of colourful veggies and fibre-rich barley for a satisfying dinner or a packed-lunch option. Swap in canned salmon or tinned sardines for more brain-boosting omega-3 fats.

INGREDIENTS

Salad

- 2 cups (500 mL) cooked and cooled pot barley
- 2 cups (500 mL) chopped cucumber
- 2 large tomatoes, cored and diced
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and grated
- 2 green onions, sliced
- 3 cans (170 g each) light tuna, drained and flaked
- 12 cups (3 L) lightly packed torn romaine lettuce (about 1 large head)
- ⅓ cup (75 mL) unsalted pumpkin seeds (optional)

Lemon-Oregano Dressing

- 1 tsp (5 mL) grated lemon zest
- ⅔ cup (150 mL) freshly squeezed lemon juice
- ½ cup (125 mL) olive oil
- 4 tsp (20 mL) liquid honey
- 1 large clove garlic, pressed
- 1 ½ tsp (7 mL) dried oregano
- ½ tsp (2 mL) **each** salt and pepper
- ¼ tsp (1 mL) crushed red pepper flakes

DIRECTIONS

- Dressing:** In a small bowl or jar, whisk or shake together lemon zest and juice, oil, honey, garlic, oregano, salt, pepper and red pepper flakes.
- In a large bowl, gently toss barley, cucumber, tomatoes, carrots, onions and tuna with half of the dressing until coated.
- Divide lettuce among 6 plates. Top with barley mixture and sprinkle with pumpkin seeds (if using). Drizzle with remaining dressing as desired. Cover and refrigerate any remaining dressing for up to three days.

SPRINKLE SEEDS

The pumpkin seeds in this savoury salad are especially rich in magnesium, which plays a critical role in brain function and mood. Low levels of magnesium have been linked to an increased risk of depression.

TRY BARLEY

Pot barley is a budget-friendly, Canadian-grown whole grain with a mild nutty flavour and a chewy texture. It's packed with fibre and other nutrients your brain loves, such as selenium, zinc and phytonutrients.



Boost-Your-Brain Meal Ideas

Enjoy these meal ideas for inspiration and make swaps that work best for you: spinach for kale, pumpkin seeds for walnuts, canned sardines for salmon. Use what you have on hand, what's on sale or in season and, of course, foods you enjoy eating.

PUMPKIN SEED-CRUSTED TROUT

Combine a few spoonfuls each of finely chopped pumpkin seeds and chopped parsley, a minced garlic clove and a pinch of salt and pepper. Brush two trout filets with a spoonful each of mustard and mayonnaise, then press into the seed mixture to coat evenly. Heat a drizzle of olive oil in a skillet and cook trout on both sides. Serve with barley and spinach-orange salad.

QUICK QUINOA FRITTATA

In a skillet, heat a drizzle of olive oil and sauté a diced sweet bell pepper and a handful of sliced mushrooms, then add a cup of cooked quinoa. Whisk together 4 large eggs with 2 chopped green onions and a pinch of salt and pepper; pour into skillet. Cook covered until eggs are set. Cut into wedges and top each with a generous handful of arugula, chopped tomato, a drizzle of olive oil and a squeeze of lemon.



NEW TO LEAFY GREENS?

Try baby leafy greens, such as baby kale, baby Swiss chard, baby spinach and baby arugula! Baby leafy greens are harvested earlier and are less bitter.

GARLICKY PASTA WITH SARDINES FOR TWO

Heat about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil in a pan over medium heat. Add 2-3 chopped anchovy filets, minced garlic, chopped sardines (1-2 tins, drained) and cook for about 3 minutes. Pour over hot cooked whole grain, chickpea, or lentil pasta. Sprinkle parsley, lemon zest, lemon juice and grated Parmesan cheese. Serve with a watercress salad dressed with olive oil and balsamic vinegar.



CRISPY ROASTED LENTIL BOWL WITH TAHINI DRESSING

Toss lentils (canned, drained and rinsed) with olive oil and za'tar seasoning, spread on a baking sheet and roast for about 30 minutes at 400 F (toss frequently). Build a bowl with the crispy roasted lentils, prepared falafel, shredded red cabbage, shaved carrots and chopped Swiss chard. Drizzle with Lemon-Garlic Tahini Dressing.

LEMON-GARLIC TAHINI DRESSING: In a small bowl, mix until well-combined: 1 cup of tahini, 1 large minced garlic clove, 2 tbsp lemon juice, a pinch salt and enough warm water (about $\frac{1}{3}$ cup) to make it pourable.

WALNUT-TOPPED BEEF

Finely chop a handful of parsley leaves, a green onion, two sprigs of fresh oregano and a few spoonfuls of walnuts. Add a good drizzle of olive oil, 3 minced garlic cloves, juice from half a lemon and a pinch of salt and hot pepper flakes. Drizzle mixture overtop of sliced grilled beef flank steak. Serve with roasted lemony potatoes and a kale slaw.

Enjoy More Brain-Healthy Foods Your Way

The foods listed here are especially rich in nutrients that your brain loves. Consider how you can add these foods to your favourite recipes or make simple swaps in your meals. Making a frittata? Add leafy greens. Love cereal? Swap sugary or low-fibre cereal for oatmeal. Small changes over time really do add up!

MAKE A SWAP

North Americans get almost half their calories from ultra-processed foods, a dietary pattern linked with poor overall mental health. Swapping ultra-processed food (sweet cereals, crackers, hot dogs, pop, ice cream, chicken nuggets) for naturally nutrient-rich foods (like the ones in these recipes) more often is a good first step to improving your diet for better brain health and mental health.

Leafy greens

All kinds, fresh and frozen:

Spinach
Kale
Arugula
Swiss chard
Mustard greens
Beet greens
Turnip greens
Collard Greens

Fruits & vegetables

All kinds, especially:

Berries (e.g., blueberries, strawberries, blackberries)
Leafy greens

Fish & seafood

Fresh, frozen, or canned:

Salmon
Trout
Sardines
Mackerel
Herring
Mussels
Oysters
Clams

Nuts & seeds

Whole and nut/seed butter, e.g.:

Almonds
Walnuts
Pumpkin seeds
Sunflower seeds

Legumes

All varieties such as:

Black beans
Black-eyed peas
Chickpeas
Pinto Beans
Lentils (brown, green, red, or yellow)

Meat

Beef
Lamb
Pork
Dark poultry

Intact & whole grains

Barley
Oats
Teff
Brown rice
Wheat berries
Farro
Quinoa

Fermented dairy

Plain kefir
Plain yogurt with live bacterial cultures

Others

Eggs
Soy (e.g., tofu, edamame)
Seaweed
Olive oil (especially extra virgin olive oil)
Coffee
Tea (white, oolong, green & black)



BEYOND NUTRITION

Food is more than nourishment for our minds and our bodies: it brings us together, gives us a break in our day and provides a source of pleasure — all of which are necessary for peak brain health and mental health.



DIETITIANS CAN HELP

You can feel good knowing that small changes can make a difference. Connect with a registered dietitian for personalized advice and for help putting brain-health nutrition into practice in your kitchen.

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