

A composite image featuring walnuts and green leaves. The top half shows several walnuts, some whole and some cracked open to reveal the kernels. The bottom half shows a close-up of green, leafy vegetables, possibly spinach or kale. The word "Walnuts" is written in large, white, sans-serif font across the center, overlaid on the green leaves.

Walnuts

The Health Benefits of Walnuts

These superfoods are rich in antioxidants & omega 3 fats that lower inflammation and reduce risk for cancer, diabetes & heart disease.

1 oz shelled English walnuts (12-14 halves) provides:

- 185 Calories, 4 gm protein, 2 gm fiber, 19 gm fat, no cholesterol

Potential benefits of consuming walnuts:

- Richest source of the essential ALA omega 3 fat (more than any other nut) which reduces inflammation & can lower cholesterol
- Rich in disease-fighting nutrients including vitamin E, folic acid, niacin and B6, magnesium, potassium and zinc
- Contain *arginine*, an amino acid which protects artery walls, improves blood flow and lowers blood pressure
- Rich in antioxidants specific to your gut, found to be protective against colorectal, breast and prostate cancers
- Sprinkle on salads, in oatmeal, stir-fry or ground into dips/sauces

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Why Walnuts?



WHAT MAKES WALNUTS GREAT?

Walnuts are tiny powerhouse foods that help lower risk for heart disease, diabetes, obesity and some forms of cancer.

Studies show that consuming walnuts can lower total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, triglycerides and *apoprotein B*, a protein linked to cardiovascular disease. The key compound is thought to be the unsaturated fats, including the essential ALA omega 3 fat, which is higher in walnuts than any other nut. ALA is anti-inflammatory, and may play a role in preventing heart arrhythmia.

Besides healthy fats, each 1-ounce portion of walnuts (about 12-14 halves) contains 4 grams of protein and 2 grams of dietary fiber.

Walnuts also contain additional phytonutrients that protect health. For example, arginine is an amino acid which protects artery walls and improves blood flow. Arginine helps produce nitric oxide, which helps lower blood pressure and keep arteries flexible.

Walnuts are a good source of vitamins and minerals, including B vitamins folic acid, niacin and B6 for energy production. Calcium and magnesium help build strong bones and potassium helps lower blood pressure. Walnuts contain a unique form of the antioxidant vitamin E, (*gamma-tocopherol*) which provides additional protection from heart problems by slowing the development of plaque in the arteries.

Other antioxidants found in walnuts have been shown to maintain gut health and protect against colorectal, breast and prostate cancers. Most of these antioxidants are found in the skins of the nut. Although the skins may taste a bit bitter, it is this bitter compound that has the most health benefit against cancers.

COMPARED TO OTHER NUTS

Walnuts are from the family of tree nuts which includes Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamias, pecans, pistachios and pine nuts. Nuts are the seed of the tree, and like other seeds, they are densely-packed with healthful nutrients.

Each of these nuts provides healthy fat, protein, fiber, vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients that benefit health. Researchers from the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health found that those who include a handful of nuts to their daily diet live longer, healthier lives than those who do not consume nuts. The Nurses' Health Study found that those who ate nuts were 20% less likely to die of cancer, heart disease and respiratory disease than those who did not eat nuts.

Research also shows that nuts help to control glucose levels in those with pre-diabetes. And because they are rich in fat, protein and fiber, they contribute to feelings of satiety and fullness, which may help you eat less unhealthy foods. Despite their high fat content, nut intake may assist you with your weight loss efforts.



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HOW TO ENJOY WALNUTS

Nuts have been a nutrient-dense staple in diets since pre-agricultural times. They can be consumed as snacks, dessert or built into meals. Munch them raw, roasted, mashed into butters or spreads. Sprinkle on salads, oatmeal or add to fruit salads or coleslaw for a little crunch.

Walnut Oil: Some may assume that since walnuts are healthy, that walnut oil is a great choice for cooking. The oil is at risk for oxidation, and must be kept away from sunlight. Cooking with walnut oil is not recommended and should be used only in cold recipes. Always buy oil in glass jars to reduce risk of BPA's from plastic. Oils contain only fats, without protein or fiber, so use sparingly.

CAUTIONS

Walnuts are approximately 80% fat, and as such, are concentrated sources of calories. A serving is 1 to 1 1/2 ounces, about 12-14 halves.

Take steps to read labels since many nut butters have added sugars and oils that lower the health benefits.

The oils in nuts are sensitive to sun and air exposure. To prevent spoilage, retain walnuts in their protective shell until ready to eat. Or store un-shelled nuts in an airtight container in the fridge for up to a month. You can also freeze walnuts for up to a year.

When roasting nuts, keep your oven temperature below 300°F and roast no more than 10 minutes or oils can become damaged. You can also roast in a dry skillet on medium heat for 3-5 minutes, stirring frequently. Longer cooking breaks down the beneficial omega 3 fats.

Nuts are a well-known cause of food allergies. Reactions can range from mild to severe, even life-threatening. Many allergies are related to peanuts, which are not tree nuts. Those allergic to peanuts may not have the same reaction to tree nuts. Caution should be taking when introducing tree nuts to those with known peanut allergies.

REFERENCES

Health.harvard.edu
Mayoclinic.org
Minimalistbaker.com

Ncbi.nlm.nih.gov
Nutritionfacts.org
Walnuts.org

Walnut Taco "Meat" (minimalistbaker.com)

Ingredients:

2/3 c sun dried tomatoes, dry
3 c raw walnuts
4 cloves garlic
1/2 tsp sea salt
1 Tbsp smoked paprika
1 Tbsp ground cumin
1 Tbsp chili powder
1-2 small habanero peppers
~1/4 c water as needed

Optional:

2 tsp coconut sugar
1 tsp nutritional yeast
cilantro
chopped radish

Directions:

1. Pulse walnuts in food processor until semi-fine and set aside.
2. Add sun dried tomatoes to a small bowl and cover with warm water. Soak 5 minutes. Drain and put in food processor with garlic and dried spices. Blend until smooth, adding water until a thick sauce forms.
3. Add mixture to walnuts and stir to coat.

Use in place of meat in tacos, salads, nachos, burritos and more. Adds healthy protein, fiber and protective compounds to your meal without saturated fat or cholesterol and without sacrificing flavor.

Leftovers can be stored 5-7 days in the refrigerator or a month in the freezer.