

Sprouting: Healthy, Easy, and Incredibly Versatile



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Looking for more and better ways to incorporate nutritional foods in your diet? Try sprouting. With its numerous health benefits, easy preparation, and the many dishes you can make out of it, there's no denying that sprouting is definitely one convenient hobby you should try out.

Sprouting and its numerous benefits

Beans, legumes, grain, and seeds have several nutrients—but they also contain anti-nutrients. These nutrients are locked up by anti-nutrients like phytic acid. By sprouting the anti-nutrients are soaked away by water, and you get to eat everything good the seeds have to offer.

Two anti-nutrients found in the seeds are phytic acid and enzyme inhibitors. Phytic acids are bound with magnesium, calcium, iron, zinc, and copper—thus making it difficult for your body to absorb these nutrients.



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Sprouting Removes Enzyme Inhibitors

Enzyme inhibitors, on the other hand, not only inhibit the enzymes found in the seeds but even those found in your body. Foods with enzyme inhibitors make digestion very difficult. Just imagine your body's natural digestive process being slowed down throughout your body because of suppressors found in the seed. As a result, these seeds with enzyme inhibitors cause lethargy, obesity, bloating, and gastrointestinal difficulties.

What sprouting does is to soak these two anti-nutrients with water, allowing your body to fully absorb the seeds' nutrients and eliminate the enzyme inhibitors.

The soaking process starts the production of beneficial enzymes which, together with Lactobacilli, neutralize the phytic acid.

Another way by which sprouting helps in digestion is by breaking down the complex vegetable proteins found in beans and legumes to simple amino acids. At the same time, its complex carbohydrates are broken down into more basic glucose molecules.

Quite fascinatingly, sprouting is responsible for turning grains and legumes from generally acid-forming foods to alkalizing agents. After all, the sprouting process initiates the first steps of turning a seed into a young plant. What is initially an acidic seed transforms into an alkaline forming food.

A quick comparison of sprouted grain with whole grain will also reveal that the former contains more nutritional advantages than the latter. Sprouting produces Vitamin C and increases Vitamins B2, B5 and B6. Sprouted grain also contains up to 35% protein and has a lower rating on the glycemic index, making it perfect for those with blood sugar problems.

Other nutrients found in sprouted seeds include potassium, zinc, phosphorus, calcium, chlorophyll, magnesium, iron, and niacin. Remember, these are the nutrients you are depriving yourself of without sprouting!



Recent studies have also pointed out that sprouts have incredibly high levels of a cancer-fighting compound sulforaphane, which also supports the absorption of antioxidants such as Vitamins C and E. As more carcinogenic compounds are found in our environment and the foods we eat, you can't afford to overlook sprouts.

Also, unlike grocery-bought vegetables and fruits that lose their nutritional content by the time they make their way to the supermarket, sprouts are fresh, crisp, and raw. Sprouting gives you access to all these nutrients without the bane of preservatives.

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How Sprouting Works

Sprouting is anything but labor-intensive. Unfortunately, the impression that it requires enormous effort is precisely what's stopping people from sprouting their own grains and seeds. Sprouting is pretty much the same for all seeds—the only difference is the time it takes to grow them.

Choosing the right seeds

First, what are the seeds and grains that qualify for sprouting? Legumes and beans are the most popular. They should be fresh and alive—if they don't sprout, then they're "dead" and no longer contain nutrients and enzymes.

Garbanzo beans, sunflower seeds, mung beans, wheat and rye berries are excellent for those who are just about to try sprouting. Cabbage, mustard, radish, and buckwheat are also good choices.

Chickpeas, or garbanzo beans, are considered the most digestible. Once sprouted by around 1 to 2 cm, their enzyme inhibitors are considered neutralized. Mung beans are also quite popular, especially for Chinese dishes.

There are certain seeds and grains that are quite toxic, such as soybeans, kidney beans, and alfalfa sprouts. Soybeans and kidney beans retain the phytic acid, and will do nothing to prevent bloatedness and indigestion.

Optimizing the sprouting conditions

After making your choice of beans, ensure that the growing conditions are at its best.

Container – There are three choices: jars, bags, and trays. Jars are the most traditional, and are quite easy to find. However, they aren't ideal for sprouts that require light; sprouts in the middle will not get enough light to grow properly. For the ideal lighting conditions, trays, with its broad surface that allows sprouts to grow naturally upward, are the best choice. Bags are for beans and legumes that don't need too much light; they don't take up a lot of space and at the same time allows air to properly seep through.

Air – Like any other growing plant, plants need air in order to survive. If you deprive the sprouts of this, they will rot and mould easily.

Water – Sprouts need to be soaked and watered around every 12 hours, and even more frequently if the weather is hot.

Consistency is important. If you forget to water them in the first few days, their growth will be stunted. When watering them, strike a balance. Too much water will drown them and too little will leave them too dry.

Space – Spread the seeds apart in such a way that they will be given room to grow. The sprouts will grow to around 30 times of their current size. If you put too much in the container, they will eventually compete for natural light, water, and air.



The Procedure

After picking out seeds that are broken, discolored, and moldy, soak the seeds for around 8 hours or overnight in water. You may also add liquid vitamins that are available in grocery stores for the plants. After soaking them, pour them through a sieve.

After this, rinse the sprouts for at least every 12 hours. Make sure not to move the sprouts around as they are taking root, but once they have, you can swish them about to remove the seed hulls. Drain the sprouts well, as standing water may cause rotting.

Rinse the grains until they have sprouted to at least 1 and 2 cm, or to your liking. This usually takes 3 to 6 days. Once you've rinsed the sprouts thoroughly for one last time, store them in a tight container. After this place the bag in a dark and cool place, usually in the refrigerator. It is best to consume them within five days.

Ways to enjoy sprouts

Now that you have your fresh and crisp sprouts, how do you go about enjoying them? Fortunately, there are quite a number of ways to include sprouts in your diet plan. Two or more of the many dishes you can make from sprouts are bound to appeal not only to you but to everyone else in the family.

You can serve sprouts steamed, raw, or stir fried. The easiest way is to steam them—simply put the sprouts over a steamer for around 5 to 8 minutes.

Eating them raw is obviously one of the healthiest ways, advisable for bean sprouts. By eating them raw, you take in as many vitamins and minerals that would have escaped by heating them or frying them. However, make sure that you thoroughly wash them before eating. When stir frying sprouts, lightly sauté them to retain its crunchy texture.

Drinks

It might surprise you, but there are actually a couple of drinks you can make out of sprouts. Use a juicer that has an extractor to create tasty drinks from sprouts along with other fruits and veggies such as oranges, carrots, and apples.

Alternatively, you can sprinkle sprouts on top of a green, healthy smoothie.



Sandwiches

Sandwiches, whether they're served hot or cold, are best enjoyed with sprouts. Instead of lettuce and celery, use sprouts. You can also fill tortilla shells with sprouts and the sandwich filling. The best celery replacements are clover, alfalfa and radish sprouts.



Salads

Salads are also one of the more popular options. Stir them into a bowl of tossed green salad. You can also spread light vinaigrette dressing on sprouts of different kinds. Combine sprouts with chopped pineapple, broccoli, and grapes—then add in a healthy dose of Greek yogurt and mayonnaise dressing. Sprouts also go well with Asian salads and potato salad.



Soups and vegetables

Sprouts make for great vegetable side dishes. You can stir fry and mix them with minced ginger and garlic, or serve them over rice or noodles. Stir them with bean soup, vegetable soup or minestrone to give it a unique crunchy texture.

Asian food

Sprouts are among the most popular ingredients found in most Asian dishes. If you want to make your sushi extra flavorful, add some radish and sunflower sprouts. Saucy stir-fry bean sprouts, a popular Asian dish, can be done easily by stir frying the mung beans and adding a tablespoon of soy sauce, a process that takes around ten minutes. Other examples of Asian dishes include egg rolls, shanghai noodles, spring rolls, and Vietnamese salad rolls.



Can't Wait To Get More Healthy Recipes?

What we have shared is a simple tip to alkalize seeds and legumes, but there are other habits you can adopt to achieve an alkaline balance in your body. In the Acid Alkaline Balance Diet, I'll be sharing with you delicious alkalizing recipes to shed the excess pounds, stay healthy and feel more energetic!

[Find Out More About The Acid Alkaline Balance Diet HERE](#)

Warmest Regards,
Emma Deangela

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