

SUPER SPROUTS

Remember when alfalfa was in sandwiches and at salad bars? Sprouts are becoming popular again, and now many more kinds are available.

what are sprouts?

Sprouts are any legumes, grains, nuts or seeds that have been soaked (usually for 8 to 12 hours), drained and then allowed to germinate over a few days. They can be made from a large variety of superfoods. Think quinoa, amaranth, wheat, rye, millet, brown rice, lentils, soybeans, peas, mung beans, almonds, sesame seeds, fenu-greek, radish and broccoli seeds, just to name a few!

why are they so super?

Compared to their mature plants, sprouts have higher levels of many nutrients, such as vitamin C, vitamin E, beta-carotene, riboflavin and folate. They also enable minerals like zinc and iron to be absorbed more readily into your body, and their protein has been found to be more easily digested.

Upon sprouting, starchy carbohydrates are converted to sugars, increasing food tolerance and reducing the flatulence factor created by legumes!

While research on sprouts is an

emerging field, these little nutrition gems have been of particular interest to scientists since the discovery that they can also contain remarkably high levels of antioxidants and polyphenols—phytonutrients known to guard against and fight chronic diseases. For example, broccoli sprouts contain 50–100 times more sulforaphane than mature broccoli, which is a potent natural stimulator of detox enzymes in your liver and it helps to block cancer.

using your sprouts

Sprouts can add texture, flavour and a significant boost to your nutritional intake. In addition to salads and sandwiches, use them in soups and stir-frys, eat them as snacks (think sprouted lentils) or as pizza toppings, blend them into smoothies and dips, or mash and dehydrate them to form crackers, pizza bases and tacos. You can also enjoy sprouted-grain bread!

You can buy sprouts from grocery stores and supermarkets, or you can buy sprouting kits and grow them yourself.



Sue Radd is the award-winning author of *The Breakfast Book* and co-author of *Eat To Live*, internationally acclaimed for showing how savvy eating can combat cancer and heart disease and improve wellbeing. See www.sueradd.com for more nutrition information or follow her on Twitter @CulinaryMed.