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Avocados: Superfood of the Season

By Tarana Rana, 25 Jan, 2016



Apples are old news. If you really want to keep the doctor away, incorporate an avocado in your daily diet.

The verdict has been in for a while now - besides their delicious rich flavour and creamy texture, avocados are bursting with medicinal benefits. This green pear-shaped fruit is hailed by many nutritional experts as a 'superfood', packed with essential nutrients, and considered to be one of the healthiest fruits in the world.

Here are some reasons why you should have one today - and everyday:

Avocados are unbelievably nutritious

Avocados are loaded with essential vitamins and minerals. "They are packed with Vitamin C, Vitamin K, Vitamin E, Vitamin B5, Vitamin B6, Folate and smaller amounts of Vitamin A, B1 (Thiamine), B2 (Riboflavin) and B3 (Niacin)," says Bijal Thoda, a Registered Dietitian, Lifestyle Consultant and Owner of Posaitive Life, which specializes in weight loss and disease management. "Avocados also contain high amounts of potassium, as well as a bit of magnesium, manganese, iron, copper, zinc and phosphorous," she adds.



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Avocados contain healthy fats

Yes, avocados have a high fat content. Lucky for us, 75 percent of the fats in this fruit are the 'good' kind. "Omega3 are the healthy fats that reduce inflammation and improve cholesterol levels," says Thoda. "[This] is highly beneficial for heart health."

However, keep in mind that portion size is important as well. According to Thoda, an ideal daily serving of avocado is about 2 tablespoons mashed or two to three thin slices.

Avocados are a great source of healthy fiber

We have all heard that fiber (the undigestible part of plant foods) is good for us, but many are unclear as to why. According to Thoda, fiber is your gut's best friend. "[It] feeds the good bacteria in your gut and has been shown to benefit weight loss, blood sugar levels and digestive health among other favourable outcomes," she says.



Avocados help in weight loss

"Avocados with their high fiber content, low carb and a rich micronutrient as well as omega 3 profiles makes it one of the favourite superfood for weight loss," says Thoda. She explains that healthy fats and fiber play an important role in weight loss by reducing inflammation and helping the body get rid of excess fat stores - while also balancing blood cholesterol and sugar levels. She adds, "Its role in optimizing bowel function can further improve cravings in addition to metabolism and energy levels, contributing to healthy weight loss."

Avocados are good for your eyes and skin

"Being rich in Vitamin A and antioxidants such as lutein, avocados can be a great source of nutrients for your eyes," says Thoda. Studies have shown that these nutrients are often linked to a reduced risk of cataracts and macular degeneration. But that's not all - avocados are great for your skin. Full of antioxidants, healthy fats and skin-friendly vitamins such as Vitamin C and

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Avocados may prevent cancer

A study published in the journal, *Cancer Research*, suggests that fat from avocados can combat myeloid leukemia, a cancer of the white blood cells. It does this by attacking the cancerous stem cells, which are the root of the disease. Researchers hope that this will help them create an avocado-derived drug to increase life expectancy for affected patients.

So now that you're aware of the multitude of health benefits, how can you incorporate more avocados in your diet?

Luckily, it's not hard to do. Avocados are a versatile fruit and taste great eaten raw, grilled, fried or baked. "Ideally one should aim to consume avocado in its natural state - layered in a sandwich or cubed in a salad," says Thoda. Avocado on toast is also a crowd-pleaser. It's incredibly simple - just mash a slice with your fork and spread it on the toast. You can add pepper, salt and chili flakes to give it a bit of a kick.

Avocados are also often used as a fat replacement in baking. So make those cupcakes healthier by simply replacing the fatty ingredient (such as oil or butter) with an equal amount of avocado.

Another classic way to consume this green wonder is guacamole. Thoda advises people to make it at home, by simple mashing avocado and adding lime and garlic. "It is best to avoid ready made dips and spreads that tend to have too many chemicals, processed sugars, oils and salts with very little avocado if at all. So make your own, [it] takes only a few seconds!" she says.

The bottom line is that a serving of avocado a day boots your nutrient level, helps to lower cholesterol and moderate fat levels. So go ahead and eat one today; your body (and tastebuds) will thank you.

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Liberal leader Justin Trudeau has removed 32 Liberal Senators from the Liberal caucus in an effort to display his seriousness towards cleaning up the Senate. Extreme patronage and partnership are at the root of the Senate expenses scandal, which has engulfed the upper chamber for more than a year, Trudeau mentioned at a news conference on Parliament Hill.

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