



Healthy U Heart Healthy Food Tasting

Recipes and Health Benefits

Dark Chocolate, Blueberry, Almond Bark

- 1 package (6 ounce) blueberry
- 1 pound dark chocolate (roughly 2 cups of chips)
- 3 ounces slivered toasted almonds

Preparation

1. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Draw an 8 inch by 10 inch rectangle on the paper with a pencil. Turn the paper over. You should be able to see the outline of the rectangle.
2. Melt chocolate in a microwave oven or over a double boiler until smooth. Use a rubber spatula to spread chocolate on the parchment paper up to the edges of the rectangle. Sprinkle blueberries, toasted almonds, and soy-nuts onto chocolate.
3. Use fingertips to press toppings gently down into melted chocolate. Cover loosely with plastic wrap and refrigerate 1 hour.
4. Use a sharp knife to cut bark into 9 squares. Cut each square in half diagonally and serve immediately.

BLUEBERRIES

Not just blueberries, but strawberries and other berries are heart healthy foods. According to one recent study, women aged 25 through 42 who ate more than three servings of blueberries and strawberries a week had a 32% lower risk of heart attack compared with those who ate less.

DARK CHOCOLATE

Several studies have shown that dark chocolate may benefit your heart, including one that found daily dark chocolate consumption could reduce nonfatal heart attacks and stroke in people at high risk for these problems. The findings applied only to dark chocolate, meaning chocolate made up of at least 60-70% cocoa.

NUTS

This includes almonds, walnuts, pistachios, peanuts and macadamia nuts, all of which contain good-for-your-heart fiber. They also contain vitamin E, which helps lower bad cholesterol. And some, like walnuts, are high in omega-3 fatty acids. Look for varieties that don't have a lot of added salt.

HUMMUS AND BAKED PITA CHIPS

- 2 Cups fresh chickpeas (canned works also), liquid reserved
- ½ cup tahini (sesame paste)
- ¼ cup Extra-Virgin Olive Oil, plus ¼ cup for drizzle
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- Salt and Fresh ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 Tablespoon ground cumin or paprika, for garnish
- ¼ cup Lemon Juice
- Chopped fresh parsley leaves, for garnish
- 4- 6" Pita, cut into 1/4

PREPARATION

1. Pre-heat oven to 350F, place pitas on baking sheet and place in oven for 10 minutes. Remove and let cool to room temperature.
2. Put everything except the parsley in a food processor and begin to process; add the chickpea liquid or water as needed to allow the machine to produce a smooth puree.
3. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Serve, drizzled with olive oil and sprinkled with a bit more cumin or paprika and some parsley.

LEGUMES

Legumes such as beans, lentils, and peas are an excellent source of protein without a lot of unhealthy fat because they come from plants. One study found that people who ate legumes at least four times a week had a 22% lower risk of heart disease compared with those who consumed them less than once a week.

There are lots of easy ways to add beans to your meals and reap the healthy benefits of the lovely legume.

1. Famously, the English eat beans on toast, and beans and rice is an everyday dish in many of the world's cuisines.
2. Tuck beans into whole-grain tortillas or pita bread.
3. Add them to soups, salads, and pasta dishes.
4. Toss beans into sautéed veggies or mix them with cooked greens and garlic.

HEALTHY MICROWAVE POPCORN

1/2 cup popcorn kernels

1 teaspoon olive oil

1 brown paper bag

PREPARATION

1. In a cup or small bowl, mix together the unpopped popcorn and oil. Pour the coated corn into a brown paper lunch sack, and sprinkle in the salt. Fold the top of the bag over twice to seal in the ingredient.
2. Cook in the microwave at full power for 2 1/2 to 3 minutes, or until you hear pauses of about 2 seconds between pops. Carefully open the bag to avoid steam, and pour into a serving bowl.
3. Add healthy and low sodium accompaniments if desired.
4. A few kernels will remain unpopped. Longer cooking may pop the rest, but will burn some of the already-popped kernels, so it is not recommended.

POPCORN BENEFITS

Popcorn delivers polyphenols which are antioxidants linked to improving heart health. What's more, popcorn is a whole grain; people who eat plenty of whole grains tend to be leaner and have a lower risk of heart disease than those who do not.

HEALTHY ACCOMPANIMENTS

Once you have popped your popcorn, it is time for the seasoning. Try to stick to low calorie and low sodium options in order to prevent this snack from quickly turning unhealthy. See below for some healthy options:

Unsweetened cocoa powder

Cinnamon sugar

Maple syrup

Italian seasonings

Lemon pepper

Garlic powder

Nutritional yeast

Old Bay seasoning

Parmesan cheese

Ranch dressing mix

GARDEN CRUDITÉ IDEAS

1. You can spruce a platter by using colored varieties of everyday vegetables, look for top on baby carrots and cauliflower
2. Think outside the box for a fun take on your vegetable platter: mini whole peppers, asparagus tips, whole radish, green beans
3. Go seasonal! Check your local farmers markets or store to see what's in season. Fresh vegetables will bring an unforgettable taste to any table.
4. Visit the Toledo's Farmers Market every Saturday at 525 Market Street Downtown in the Warehouse District from 8am-1pm
5. Don't skip the dip. While ranch dressing is usually the go-to for vegetable platters. You can substitute tasty lower calorie options such as tabbouleh, hummus, baba ghanoush

WHICH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES ARE BEST?

That's easy: They're all good! If you eat many different types of fruits and veggies, you're sure to get all the different types of nutrients you need. The American Heart Association recommends filling at least half your plate with fruits and veggies in order to make it to the recommended 4-5 servings of each per day.

WHAT IF YOU'RE ALREADY EATING PLENTY OF FRUITS AND VEGGIES EVERY DAY?

You may be ready for the next step: include more color. All fruits and vegetables contain vitamins, minerals and other nutrients that may help prevent heart disease, cancer and other illnesses. Some of these nutrients are fiber, potassium, folate, and vitamin A and C. The best way to get all the various nutrients is to eat fruits and vegetables of many different colors. The five main color groups and examples in each group are listed below. Eat from as many color groups as you can each day.

INFUSED WATER

Adding various fruits or vegetables to your water, or “infusing” it has numerous benefits. In addition to adding healthy flavors to your drink, this will assist you in meeting your required water intake for the day (try to drink at least 64 ounces of water per day). A few other benefits of infusing your water include: helping to satisfy your sweet tooth, adding more nutrients to your diet, and help cut your sugar sweetened beverage addiction.

HOW DO I INFUSE MY WATER?

Add desired peeled and sliced (if the fruit has the skin on still) fruits to 1/2 gallon or a whole gallon of water. For best flavor, leave at least 4 hours or overnight in the refrigerator to let the flavors of the fruit infuse into the water. Add one of the following for best results:

Strawberry	Mint
Lemon and Lime	Basil
Cucumber	Ginger
Pineapple	Spearmint
Watermelon	Cinnamon
Orange	Apple
Cherries	Grapefruit
Grapes	

GREEN TEA

Lowering your risk of cardiovascular disease may be as easy as drinking green tea. Studies suggest this light, aromatic tea may lower LDL cholesterol and triglycerides, which may be responsible for the tea’s association with reduced risk of death from heart disease and stroke.

Drinking green tea rapidly improves the health of the delicate lining of the blood vessels. These protective benefits for heart disease come from the plant compound's ability to improve blood flow, lower cholesterol and blood pressure, and protect against the oxidation of LDL particles that can lead to atherosclerosis.

HOT OR ICED TEA?

Both hot and iced green teas have cardiovascular benefits. Keep in mind that iced teas may be more diluted than hot green tea. Some store bought brands of iced green tea have as much as 53 g of sugar in a 20-oz. bottle, so be aware of labels prior to drinking the green tea.