



REMEDY

ANCIENT MEDICINE FOR
MODERN ILLNESS

20 Natural Remedies + Recipes For Healing Inflammation

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What Is Inflammation?

Inflammation is one of those buzzwords that gets tossed around quite a bit in the health and wellness community, and when we hear it, we usually think inflammation = bad.

But did you know, inflammation is a natural and healthy part of your body's immune response?

Yep, inflammation helps the body fight off illnesses and can actually protect us from harm. In most cases, it is a necessary part of the healing process that occurs when a physical factor triggers an immune reaction.

It gets a bad rap because it's sometimes painful and perhaps more widely talked about when it's problematic, but it's a sign that your immune system is on the defense and operating as it should against potentially threatening security breaches.

There are two types of inflammation: acute and chronic. While acute serves a biological purpose, chronic is what happens when something goes biologically haywire...

In this guide, we'll lay out the differences between the two, and share how you can take your health back into your own hands by reducing inflammation through science-backed herbal remedies and healthier dietary choices. We'll also leave you with 10 anti-inflammatory recipes, so you can get started kicking inflammation's butt today!

Helpful Inflammation Vs. Problematic Inflammation

Acute / “Helpful” Inflammation

Acute inflammation, or short-term inflammation, occurs as the body’s natural immune response to tissue damage or the presence of a foreign body that could cause infection — such as a thorn or pathogen.

When the body detects an “intruder,” the immune system immediately triggers a number of reactions, including:

1. The release of leukocytes — white blood cells, such as neutrophils, that help fight pathogens
2. The accumulation of fluids and blood plasma proteins by the body’s tissue that results in swelling (edema).
3. The expansion of small blood vessels (vasodilation) to enable leukocytes and plasma proteins to reach the injury site more easily.

Acute inflammation is a normal response from your body and aids in recovery. The duration of time in which this type of inflammation sticks around is determined by the individual’s body and the location of the injury or infection — typically acute inflammation is short lived.

However, there is another kind of inflammation that should definitely raise concern and typically sticks around way past its welcome...

Chronic / “Problematic” Inflammation

While inflammation plays a vital role in healing, no one is meant to be chronically inflamed. Every body is different though. Some people have conditions that can trigger an over-reactive immune response, leaving their bodies in a constant state of alert, which can lead to constant low level inflammation

Chronic inflammation occurs in response to disturbances to the tissues of the body, and can develop if a person has or experiences any of the following:

- Sensitivity and Exposure: Both long-term and short-term exposure can generate inflammation in the body. Sensitivity to a foreign substance can result in an immediate allergic reaction, but low-level exposure over the long term to chemicals, food, and even emotions can lead to chronic inflammation
- Autoimmune Disorders: The immune system makes a mistake and turns on healthy tissue in the body.
- Auto-Inflammatory Diseases: Genetically inherited, this will affect the way the immune system functions on an innate level.
- Persistent Acute Inflammation: Sometimes an injury doesn't heal properly, and acute inflammation is triggered over an extended period of time, the body essentially thinks it is under constant attack, and thus turns acute inflammation into a chronic condition (long-term/persistent)

Unfortunately, chronic inflammation may increase the risk of various diseases, including some cancers, rheumatoid arthritis, periodontitis, hay fever, diabetes, psoriasis, and asthma.

The Underlying Root Cause Of Disease

Chronic inflammation can last for months or even years, and is linked to many diseases. This is because when you have chronic inflammation, your body's inflammatory response can eventually start damaging healthy cells, tissues, and organs.

Over time, this can lead to DNA damage, tissue death, and internal scarring. All of these set the stage for the development of disease.

Biomarkers To Look For

Wondering if you suffer from chronic inflammation? In some cases, chronic inflammation manifests as a very subtle feeling of being unwell. Some symptoms include chronic fatigue, mouth sores, headaches, rashes, abdominal pain, and chest pain.

When inflammation is present in the body, there will be higher levels of specific substances that can be measured, known as biomarkers. One such biomarker is C-reactive protein (CRP).

If you want to assess the level of inflammation in your body, your healthcare team may assess your CRP levels, among other things. [1]

[1] https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/encyclopedia/content.aspx?contenttypeid=167&contentid=c_reactive_protein_serum

How To Reduce Unwanted Inflammation

But do not fear — there's evidence that healthier diet and lifestyle choices can help to reduce unwanted inflammation

Of course, what you choose to put into your body affects how your body runs. Some foods contain ingredients that trigger or worsen inflammation. This is because some foods can trigger the formation of free radicals. Sugary or processed foods may do this, while fresh, organic whole foods are less likely to have this effect.

Not So Radical Free Radicals

Free radicals — the natural byproduct of some bodily processes, including exercise and digestion — are unstable atoms that have one or more unpaired electrons. Due to this uneven number, they are in a constant search to bind with another electron to stabilize themselves. This uneven number also allows them to easily react with other molecules. These reactions are called oxidation.

Too many free radicals in the body cause oxidative stress. Oxidative stress refers to the damage that excessive amounts of free radicals can inflict on cells and tissues in the body, and contributes to the natural aging process.

Over time, the effects of oxidative stress may also contribute to the development of a variety of diseases. This is because free radicals adversely alter lipids, proteins, and DNA, which can trigger several diseases including: atherosclerosis, cancer, asthma, inflammatory joint disease, diabetes, senile dementia, and degenerative eye disease.

In defense, the body generates its own antioxidants that help remove these toxic substances. But as the body ages, it is less able to fight the effects of free radicals, which means that our cells experience more damage — increasing the risk of inflammation and contributing to aging and a host of degenerative processes. That's why it's important, especially as we get older, to supplement your body's natural response system with foods that are rich in antioxidants.

Which is why an anti-inflammatory diet is one that favors foods that are rich in antioxidants (like non-GMO fruits and vegetables), over those that increase the production of free radicals (like mystery meat and processed foods).

Foods To Eat

An anti-inflammatory diet should combine a variety of foods that are rich in nutrients, provide a wide range of antioxidants, and contain healthful fats. Organic fruits and vegetables, foods containing omega-3 fatty acids, lean protein, healthful fats, and spices are all important players in the fight against unwanted inflammation.

The Mediterranean diet is an example of an anti-inflammatory diet — it consists of oily fish (packed with omega-3s) and plant-based foods. This type of diet provides the body with loads of healthy oils that can reduce inflammatory proteins in the body.

Foods that help manage inflammation include: non-GMO, whole foods high in antioxidants like blueberries, blackberries, strawberries, raspberries, cherries, cacao, artichokes, red cabbage, pinto beans, broccoli, spinach, beets, kale, seeds, and orange vegetables such as sweet potatoes, carrots, and acorn and butternut squash, among others.

Raw or moderately cooked vegetables, legumes (such as lentils), spices like ginger and turmeric, probiotics and prebiotics, tea, and some herbs are also recommended. We'll touch more on these later.

In general, we think these are some pretty good rules to live by:

- 1. Fresh food over processed food.** Processing food changes the content of food and can zap the nutritional value.
- 2. Read labels.** While something can contain an anti-inflammatory aid, it could be sandwiched between other ingredients that could counter the health benefits (Look for added sugars and fats.)
- 3. Eat by color.** When you load your plate with varying colors of fruits and veggies, you're loading your plate with a wide range of antioxidants and nutrients.

Foods To Avoid

An anti-inflammatory diet discourages or limits the consumption of red meat, dairy products, alcohol and processed foods — like foods containing gluten. People who are following an anti-inflammatory diet should avoid or limit their intake of: foods with added sugar, unhealthy oils, processed foods, and excess alcohol.

In addition, people may find it beneficial to limit their intake of gluten, nightshades, and carbohydrates.

Gluten

While the level of sensitivity to gluten varies from person to person, none of us are really supposed to be able to digest gluten as it exists today. Gluten might even be causing you “silent,” chronic issues like headaches, bloating, and fatigue.

Unfortunately, the wheat we use today — especially in the US — has been so modified that it’s become difficult to digest. To put it another way, the oldest wheat germ still in existence, known as einkorn, has only 14 chromosomes, while today’s modern wheat has 42 chromosomes! [2]

Einkorn is the only wheat never to be hybridized, and because of this, many gluten intolerant people can enjoy einkorn sourdoughs. It was first planted approximately 9,500 years ago (7500 BCE) during the Neolithic Revolution. [3]

With dozens of extra chromosomes and so many modifications later, the gluten protein structure in today’s modern wheat is so altered, making it difficult to digest

But there’s good news! A gluten-free diet is easier now than ever to live by. If you suspect that gluten is triggering inflammation for you, you may wish to eliminate it from your diet for a while to see if your symptoms improve, or speak to your health team about getting tested for food allergies.

[2] <https://plantscience.psu.edu/research/projects/grains/heritage-grains/einkorn>

[3] http://www.uclastresslab.org/pubs/Furman_NatureMedicine_2019.pdf?fbclid=IwAR12VMZJkJYVWVPPNpUQFpCAIkGdQacTZrVWRI_b9xmz8QqCU54Xxpn9avw

Nightshades

Now here's where it gets a little tricky...

Nightshades are an extensive plant family (*Solanaceae*), with nearly 3,000 different plant species including tomatoes, potatoes, eggplants, and bell peppers.

Nightshades are rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, making them desirable health foods. Yet at the same time, they contain high levels of lectins and alkaloid molecules like solanine that may cause digestive disruption.

Lectins are proteins that help plants fend off pathogens. For some people, they may bind to the gut, which can change the balance of good bacteria, block digestion of other foods, and disrupt hormonal balance.

An elimination diet can help you discover if you have a food sensitivity to nightshades. No one knows your body like you do; if you suspect nightshades might be triggering you, try cutting them from your diet for 2-4 weeks to see if your symptoms improve. You might not be sensitive to the entire plant family, so try eliminating just one nightshade vegetable at a time.

You can also neutralize lectins through cooking methods, especially pressure cooking, soaking in water for several hours, or fermenting; and there are supplements you can take to aid in the digestion of lectins.



Carbohydrates

Even when the carbs are healthy, a high-carb diet can be problematic, as it may promote inflammation in some people. However, some carb-rich foods, such as sweet potatoes and whole grains, are excellent sources of antioxidants and other nutrients.

The real problem here is processed carbs – which are present in foods like white bread, white pasta, and many baked goods. These foods are known as starch carbohydrates, or “rapidly digested carbohydrates,” which are broken down quickly by the body to glucose. This causes blood sugar to rise and the pancreas to produce a large load of insulin in an attempt to remove the sugar from your blood, triggering an inflammatory response

Choosing higher fiber, less processed carbohydrates is just one step to achieving less inflammation through your daily intake. An easy way to remember this is to “always choose foods that come from a plant, and less of those made in a plant!” [4]

Taking Control Of Your Health

At the end of the day, no one knows your body better than you do. Use this book as a guide to consult along the way on your quest for reducing unwanted inflammation – not as a substitute for your own intuition.

If something feels right or wrong, trust that. Quite literally, trust your gut!

If you want to try removing certain foods from your diet, introduce them back one at a time, so you’ll be able to trace the inflammatory culprit. If your body feels great just as you are, focus more on what antioxidant-rich foods you can incorporate into your diet and less on which foods to eliminate.

We hope you enjoy the 11 herbal remedies and 10 delicious recipes that follow!

[4] <https://whyweight.com/how-carbohydrates-influence-inflammation/>

Part I

11 Anti-Inflammatory Herbal Allies

In this section, we'll focus on some of our favorite anti-inflammatory herb friends and how best to utilize them. Making sure you're getting your daily dose of antioxidants doesn't always have to mean cooking a full meal. It can be as simple as brewing some tea or applying topical essential oils.

There are many herbs that can arm us in the fight against pesky free radicals. But before we begin, it's incredibly important that you communicate with your healthcare team about what holistic options and healing remedies you are implementing.

While all of the plants mentioned can reduce inflammation, some can affect other bodily functions and systems, so you'll want to be sure that adding these herbs into your regimen will flow with the overall picture of your health

Without further ado, let's talk about herbs!

Green Tea

Did you know that tea is the second most consumed beverage in the world, behind water? About 20 percent of the tea produced worldwide is green – and with good reason!

Green tea is native to China and India and has been hailed for its health benefits for centuries. In both cultures, green tea has a positive history of treating wounds and even controlling bleeding! Other uses include aiding in digestion, improving one's mental health, and helping to regulate body temperature.

In some Blue Zones (regions of the world where a higher than average number of people are reported to be living longer than average) green tea is considered healthier than water!

The medicinal properties of green tea are still put to use today and its medicinal wonders are still being uncovered.

So what makes it so awesome? All teas – except for herbal tea (tisane) – are brewed from the dried leaves of the *Camellia sinensis* bush. The level of oxidation of the leaves determines the type of tea. Green tea is made from unoxidized leaves and is therefore one of the least processed teas, which means it potentially contains the most antioxidants and beneficial polyphenols! [5] These higher percentages of polyphenols, which include catechins (EGCGs), are related to preventing cell damage.

So, if you don't already indulge in the delights of green tea every now and again, we highly recommend you try it! Besides all of these lovely health benefits, it's simply delicious!

For the best flavor, we recommend buying loose leaf green tea. While the caffeine content in green tea is low, it is present. If you're sensitive to caffeine, avoid consuming green tea in the afternoons or evenings.

Drink in the health benefits

[5] <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0963996912003018>

Turmeric

Known as the “Golden Spice,” turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) is a tall plant that grows in Asia. While Ayurvedic and Chinese medicine have used turmeric to treat inflammatory conditions, skin diseases, digestive ailments, and liver conditions for centuries, Western medicine has only just begun to study the effects of turmeric as a healing agent.

The turmeric we see on spice racks today is made from the ground roots of the plant — ground turmeric is also a major ingredient in curry powder. Capsules, teas, powders, and extracts are some of the turmeric products available commercially — though you have to be wary of the way you consume turmeric and whether or not your body can actually absorb its health benefits

Curcumin is one of the active ingredients in turmeric, and lends it its incredible anti-oxidative powers. But it also gets metabolized by the body more quickly than it can be absorbed — which is why you’ll need a few tricks to make this incredible medicine more bioavailable to you.

Piperine from black pepper can increase the body’s absorption of turmeric, so if purchasing a supplement or tincture, look to see if that is included.

When cooking, consider adding turmeric (and pepper) to spice mixtures in curries, barbecue rubs, dressings or marinades. Cooking with fats such as coconut oil, or enjoying a golden milk latte or smoothie with almond or coconut milk will also optimize the body’s absorption of curcumin, since it bonds to fats.

You’ll find turmeric in our recipes for Vegetable Curry and Lentil Soup, but turmeric can also be enjoyed as tea. Consider making your own using whole fresh turmeric root.

One last thing to consider... When consuming turmeric, use the whole root! Turmeric is more than just curcumin. When turmeric is processed, it is stripped down and many supplements end up containing only the extracted curcumin. In traditional medicine, using the full root of turmeric is common practice. Not only does this access all 100 compounds in the root (which contain potent pharmacological properties), but it allows the compounds to work synergistically to aid in better absorption of the curcumin.

So we highly recommend you consume turmeric in its natural form, the way Mother Nature intended!

Ginger

Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) has a very long history of use in various forms of traditional and alternative medicine. Another amazing superfood, ginger is a flowering plant that originated in Southeast Asia. It's among the healthiest—and most delicious—spices on the planet! Belonging to the Zingiberaceae family, it's closely related to turmeric, cardamom, and galangal.

Ginger is an excellent source of antioxidants! Studies have shown that ginger can reduce various types of oxidative stress, and may help prevent or treat arthritis, inflammation, and various types of infection. Researchers have also studied its potential to reduce the risk of diabetes, cancer, and other health problems. [6]

The unique fragrance and flavor of ginger come from its natural oils, namely, gingerol. Gingerol is responsible for much of ginger's medicinal properties and has powerful anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects. It may help reduce oxidative stress.

The rhizome (underground part of the stem) is the part commonly used as a spice. It's easily accessible at the grocery or farmers' markets, and can be added to almost anything. Try it raw or cooked. Add it to your morning smoothing, soups, and stir-fried vegetables, or enjoy it as tea.

[6] <https://whyweight.com/how-carbohydrates-influence-inflammation/>

Garlic

Garlic isn't only good for warding off vampires...or first dates. It also kicks some serious free radical butt!

Garlic, or *Allium sativum*, was used in Ancient Egypt for health and therapeutic benefits. Throughout history in the Middle East, East Asia, and Nepal, garlic was used to treat bronchitis, hypertension, tuberculosis, liver disorders, dysentery, flatulence, colic, intestinal worms, rheumatism, diabetes, and fevers.

Currently, garlic is widely used for several conditions linked to the blood system and heart, including high cholesterol, heart attack, coronary heart disease, and hypertension.

It seems that garlic is a cure all! Is there anything garlic can't do? It certainly boosts your immune system, and it's also packed with antioxidants! So how best to take your garlic?

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“The ancient Greek physician Hippocrates, known today as ‘the father of Western medicine,’ prescribed garlic for a wide range of conditions. And garlic was even given to the original Olympic athletes in Ancient Greece – possibly the earliest example of ‘performance enhancing’ agents used in sports.”

- Medical News Today

A study published in Food and Chemical Toxicology warned that short-term heating reduces the anti-inflammatory effects of fresh raw garlic extracts. [7] So it may be best to consume it raw.

Try making a raw garlic butter for dipping oil by adding it to olive oil. Or use it as a salad topper. And if you buy green garlic, or younger, more nutrient dense garlic, the benefits will only increase!

[7] <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0278691513002287>

Rosemary

A fragrant evergreen herb native to the Mediterranean, rosemary has been hailed since ancient times for its medicinal properties. A member of the mint family Lamiaceae, Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*, *Salvia rosmarinus*) was traditionally used to help alleviate muscle pain, improve memory, and boost the immune and circulatory systems.

Rosemary is a rich source of antioxidants and anti-inflammatory compounds, which help boost the immune system and improve blood circulation. It is also a good source of iron, calcium, and vitamin B-6.

A study published in *Bioscience, Biotechnology, and Biochemistry*, concluded that rosemary might be a useful anti-inflammatory and anti-tumor agent. [8]

Rosemary is typically used as a whole dried herb or a dried powdered extract, while teas and liquid extracts are made from fresh or dried leaves. Enjoy a cup of rosemary tea, add some fresh sprigs to roasted dishes or even raw veggies, or try our recipe for Rustic Rosemary Potatoes.

[8] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17827696/>

Mushrooms: Reishi & Chaga

Reishi mushrooms, or *Ganoderma lucidum*, are rare mushrooms that grow at the base of deciduous trees and have been a part of traditional medicine practices for more than 2,000 years. It's said that reishi mushrooms can boost the immune system and fight cancer

Reishi mushrooms contain polysaccharides (beta-glucans), peptides, and triterpenoids, which may provide some of their health benefits. They also contain dietary fiber and various minerals, vitamins, and amino acids.

The chaga mushroom, or *Inonotus obliquus*, is a nutrient dense superfood that grows on birch trees throughout the northern hemisphere. It resembles a dark clump of dirt more than a mushroom, but can be identified by its orange tissue

Like reishi, chaga mushrooms are rich in a wide variety of vitamins, minerals, and nutrients, including: B-complex vitamins, vitamin D, potassium, amino acids, fiber, copper, selenium, zinc, iron, manganese, magnesium and calcium.

They also contain beta-glucans, triterpenoids, and other antioxidants that provide anti-inflammatory protection and may reduce low-density lipoprotein (LDL), the so-called "bad" cholesterol.

It gets cooler... A 2009 study found that triterpenes, the compounds found in chaga and some other mushrooms, cause tumor cells to self-destruct. [9] And, unlike other cancer treatments, chaga does not appear to harm healthy cells. [10]

So how do you take your mushrooms?

You can buy mushroom powder and enjoy a nourishing cup of mushroom tea! Mushroom tea is a decoction made by boiling then simmering dried mushrooms or mushroom powder in water. Mushroom powder can be dried, ground (best for tea making) or dried, extracted. We recommend using a powdered extract for the infamous chaga latte — they're so rich and delicious, and make for a wonderful replacement for coffee!

[9] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19367670/>

[10] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22135889/>

Aloe Vera

You may have heard about aloe vera for your sunburns, but did you know that you could eat it?

There is a reason aloe vera has so many positive nicknames. Some call it the “wonder plant,” while in ancient Egypt it was referred to as the “plant of immortality.”

Aloe vera occurs naturally in North Africa and is recognizable for its short, stocky stems. These stems, along with the plant’s flowers and leaves (the entire plant!) contains natural antioxidants that you can use inside and outside your body for a number of healing opportunities.

Our ancient ancestors were on to this plant’s healing potential since the 16th century B.C. – recorded in the Ebers Papyrus (an Egyptian medical record). [11]

You may have seen aloe juice at your local grocery and you may have even tried it – in which case, you know... it doesn’t taste the greatest. So why not add it to your morning smoothie? Blend it up with all that other goodness and you’ll be none the wiser. Avoid drinking anything labeled as “whole leaf” as this could disturb your digestion, though it’s great when used topically!

Consider adding it to the Berry Burst Smoothie recipe we’ve shared for an extra anti-oxidative punch!

[11] http://www.jsirjournal.com/Vol3_Issue5_14.pdf

Frankincense

Frankincense, or *Boswellia serrata*, comes from the *Boswellia* tree. It has a long history in myth and folk medicine, especially in India and African countries; and in the Bible, it's one of three gifts that the wise men offered to Jesus — possibly because of its apparent healing powers.

Frankincense can ease both inflammation and pain. It's also a fast acting supplement that may help with osteoarthritis pain, and may also help reduce cartilage loss and hinder autoimmune mechanisms.

In 2006, a study published in *Planta Medica* showed a number of ways the boswellic acid in frankincense might fight inflammation. The authors noted that Boswellic acid inhibits 5-lipoxygenase, and it might also target free radicals. [12] All playing a role in inflammation

Frankincense can be used as a topical salve or essential oil. The usual dosage is an extract containing 30–40 percent boswellic acids, which a person can take in 300–500 mg doses, two to three times per day. [13] And, combining frankincense with curcumin — (our friend in turmeric) — may increase its potency.

Frankincense is typically safe, with few side effects. However, some people report stomach pain and gastrointestinal problems, so always be sure to consult your health team before using.

[12] <https://www.thieme-connect.com/products/ejournals/html/10.1055/s-2006-947227>

[13] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3011108/>

Black Pepper

Black pepper is more than just a kitchen staple — it's been deemed the “King of Spices” and used in ancient Ayurvedic medicine for thousands of years due to its high concentration of the beneficial plant compound piperine, which studies have found to have potent antioxidant properties. [14]

One of the most commonly used spices worldwide, black pepper is made by grinding peppercorns, or dried berries from the vine *Piper nigrum*.

The anti-inflammatory effects of black pepper have not yet been studied extensively in people. Rodent studies, however, have observed that ground black pepper and piperine supplements may reduce free radical damage.

In one study, rats fed a high-fat diet plus either black pepper or a concentrated black pepper extract had significantly fewer markers of free radical damage in their cells after 10 weeks compared to rats fed a high-fat diet alone.

Researchers have also studied black peppers' medical effect on arthritis. Using piperine, one study revealed that this specific component of black pepper can lessen swelling in joints, resulting in fewer blood markers of inflammation. And in studies with mice, piperine was found to have a huge impact on inflammation in airways — which suggests it can help with asthma and seasonal allergies.

Other benefits of black pepper include aid in absorption of nutrients and plant compounds (like those found in turmeric and green tea). [15]

Are you sold? This one is easy to integrate — simply add black pepper to each and every savory meal!

[14] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17987447/>

[15] <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/black-pepper-benefits>

Chili Peppers

The chili pepper is widely considered to be a powerful anti-inflammatory spice, so be sure to include a dash in your next dish!

Chili peppers (*Capsicum annuum*) are the fruits of the Capsicum plant, which belongs to the nightshade family. There are many types of chili pepper, all of which pack different heat. All chili peppers contain natural compounds capsaicinoids — these are what give the spicy fruit its anti-inflammatory properties

Capsicum is not only responsible for the heat in any pepper, but does something truly fun and amazing: it targets a receptor in the gut that produces the compound anandamide.

Anandamide is sometimes referred to as the “bliss” compound. This is why when you eat cacao you feel so good. Cannabis, CBD, and other exotic substances also activate this “bliss” compound. Anandamide is produced in the body, but these outside sources activate the endocannabinoid system which helps release the anandamide.

Actually, ancient peoples in Mexico (Incan, Mayan, Aztec) really understood this effect, which is why you see cacao and chilis being used hand-in-hand in these cultures — religiously and even ceremonially.

So start incorporating chili peppers into your diet today! Use dried chili flakes to season any savory meal or chop up some fresh chili peppers to garnish dishes like Thai noodles, vegetable chilis, or curries.

Raw Cacao

Our ancestors were delighting in cacao—or *Theobroma cacao*, also called the “Food of the Gods”—over 5,000 years ago! Cacao has a rich history in Mesoamerican native cultures, where it gained divine status for peoples like the Olmecs, Izapan, Maya, Toltecs, Aztecs and Incas.

A frothy, godly, and highly prized drink, it was used in rituals, ceremonies, feasts and festivals. The beans were even used as an early form of money — and even counterfeited!

In Aztec Nahuatl language, “chocolātl” means “bitter water” or “bitter drink.” Ironically, this is where today’s word for sweetened cacao, “chocolate,” comes from. [16]

Raw cacao is packed with antioxidants that reduce inflammation, reduce your risk of disease, and lead to healthier aging.

Cacao’s anti-inflammatory effects are due to its flavanols, which also keep the endothelial cells that line your arteries healthy.

Chocolate as we know it today, is a processed form of cacao with less healthy compounds. Fermentation and some degree of roasting have been used traditionally throughout history. But for optimum health benefits, choose cacao that is as little processed as possible.

Look for dark chocolate that contains at least 70% cocoa—a greater percentage is even better—and no added sugars or fats in order to reap all of the anti-inflammatory benefits of this sacred plant

For both its health properties and spiritual power, we prefer cacao in its purest form. Try buying raw cacao nibs and adding them to smoothies, açaí bowls, on top of fruit, or to coconut or oat milk yogurt. Consider adding them to the Berry Burst Smoothie or the creamy Dark Chocolate Pudding.

[16] <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335844594>

Part II

10 Simple And Delightful Anti-Inflammatory Recipes

Note: To get the most nutritional benefits from the following recipes we encourage using organic, non-GMO, local farmed, seasonal produce when possible. Try to follow the guidelines of the Clean 15 [17] and the Dirty Dozen. [18] Also, if a recipe says “bunch”- if smaller greens use 3 tbsps chopped, if larger greens (kale, swiss chard) use 7 to 8 ounces chopped, or 8 to 12 leaves

With anti-inflammatory diets and cleanses gaining popularity, the notion of reducing inflammation through food is nothing new. The idea that inflammation underlies most—if not all—disease is still being distilled, but we are becoming ever more aware of how the food we eat impacts the overall picture of our health.

Integrating all of this information may seem overwhelming, but that’s why we’ve included 10 simple and delicious recipes that you can try today.

That said, only you know how certain foods make you feel. Pick and choose from the 10 recipes and cooking methods included in this section. Do what feels right and what not only tastes good, but what leaves you feeling stellar!

Our first recipe packs a heavy antioxidant punch! First up: the Berry Burst Smoothie.

[17] <https://www.ewg.org/foodnews/clean-fifteen.php>

[18] <https://www.ewg.org/foodnews/dirty-dozen.php>

Berry Burst Smoothie

Vitamin C, Vitamin A, and the various phytonutrients in berries function as powerful antioxidants. Perhaps this is why many studies have suggested that increased consumption of berries decreases the risks of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease, and can also help maintain bone strength, mental health, and healthful blood pressure. [19]

And what's more, berries contain a type of flavonoid called Anthocyanin which can suppress the inflammation that may lead to cardiovascular disease. Flavonoids are plant compounds that have powerful antioxidant effects, which can better arm your body in the fight against disease-linked free radicals

Berries also contain the flavonoid Quercetin, which is good for your heart.

So what are you waiting for? Why not start your day with this antioxidant-rich cocktail?

Ingredients (Yields 2 Smoothies):

- 1 cup blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, or blackberries (berry of choice, or a mixture, fresh or frozen)
- 1/2 avocado
- 1/2 banana
- 2 handfuls spinach or kale
- 1 cup coconut milk, or other preferred nut milk such as almond
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 tsp cayenne
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp ginger

Preparation:

- Throw all of the ingredients in a blender and mix!
- Add more coconut milk or water for a thinner consistency.
- Option to serve with antioxidant-rich chia seeds or cacao nibs.
- Taste the berry rainbow; enjoy!

[19] <https://content.iospress.com/articles/journal-of-berry-research/jbr139>

Holy [Homemade] Guacamole!

Both avocados and garlic are anti-inflammatory superstars! And guacamole is perhaps one of the simplest things you can make at home. If you've never whipped up your own guac, you'll be amazed by how so few ingredients can taste so darn good!

Try our recipe below, or have some fun putting your own spin on this beloved classic. All you need are fresh ingredients! When it comes to crowd-raving guacamole, the key is to not get too fancy. Guacamole is meant to be easy to make and delicious.

With just 8 simple ingredients, here's one of the all-time best dip recipes:

Ingredients:

- 3-4 avocados
- 1/2 yellow onion (sub red onion if preferred)
- 2 roma tomatoes
- 1 bunch cilantro
- 1 jalapeño (sub serrano pepper for a little extra heat)
- 2 cloves garlic, finely dice
- 1 lime
- 1 pinch sea salt
- 1 pinch black pepper

Preparation:

- Slice three ripe avocados in half, remove the pit and scoop them into a mixing bowl. Then use a fork to gently mash them to your desired level of chunky or smooth.
- Squeeze fresh lime juice over the mashed avocados.
- Add the onions, tomatoes, cilantro, jalapeño pepper, garlic, sea salt and pepper and stir everything together.
- Buen provecho! Serve with yucca or cassava chips.

Kale Shiitake Sauté

A member of the mustard or Brassicaceae family, kale is a leafy, cruciferous vegetable that is rich in nutrients – among them, fiber, antioxidants, calcium, vitamins C and K, selenium, beta carotene and iron. Consuming kale can help manage your blood pressure, boost your digestive health, and protect against cancer and type 2 diabetes. For this recipe, we'll use curly kale, but feel free to use whichever type appeals most to you. You'll need to remove the leaves from the fibrous stalk by running your hand down the stalk in the direction of growth.

And who better to pair with kale than our antioxidant-rich friend, the shiitake mushroom? Among the antioxidant agents present in mushrooms are: Selenium, Vitamin C and Choline. Can we get a kale-yeah?

We hope you find this tasty recipe every bit as satisfying as we do

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp olive or sesame oil (sub for grass-fed butter or ghee if preferred)
- 16 oz shiitake mushrooms
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 tbsp coconut aminos (sub gluten free tamari if preferred)
- 1 tbsp Japanese rice vinegar
- 2 cups chopped curly kale (sub preferred kale variety)
- 1 tbsp sesame seeds (optional)

Preparation:

- Chop the mushrooms and garlic.
- Heat the oil in a wok or frying pan. Cook the garlic for 30 seconds, then add the mushrooms. Stir-fry for 3-5 minutes until softened, then add the coconut aminos and vinegar.
- Let it bubble for a few seconds and then add the rinsed kale. Cover with a lid, reduce the heat and let it steam for a couple of minutes.
- Once the kale leaves have wilted, season with sesame seeds (if desired) and serve.
- Delight in this savory meal and the many health benefits it boasts

Rockin' Broccoli Salad

Broccoli has a shiny reputation as a superfood – and not without good reason; it contains a wealth of nutrients and antioxidants. Talk about a one stop shop – broccoli is big time anti-inflammatory! And we just can't get enough of this Broccoli Salad

This is a great salad that can be made for "on the go" lunches or large parties – as it keeps well being made ahead of time and chilled.

Ingredients:

- 1 large head broccoli
- 3 tbsp tahini
- 2 tbsp apple juice
- 1 tsp apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 tsp sea salt
- 1/4 tsp ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup toasted walnuts, chopped
- 1/3 cup red onion, finely choppe
- 2 tbsp dried currants
- Crushed red chili flakes, to tast (optional)

Preparation:

- Cut florets from broccoli and pee and thinly slice stalk. Steam until just tender, about 4 minutes.
- Meanwhile, in a large bowl, whisk together tahini, apple juice, apple cider vinegar, salt, pepper and red chili flakes (if using)
- Add broccoli, walnuts, red onion and currants and toss to combine.
- Serve warm, room temperature or chilled. Enjoy!

Savory Lentil Soup With Turmeric

Known as *Lens culinaris*, the lentil is one of the oldest food sources in human history. Lentils combat inflammation because they're LOADED with antioxidant and anti-inflammatory compounds, fiber and protein. It's no wonder our distant forbearers turned to them as a primary source of plant sustenance!

They're also a good source of potassium, magnesium, calcium, phosphorus, lysine, and folate. Magnesium, in particular, has been shown to reduce inflammation. [20]

Some claim that beans and legumes can cause inflammation because they contain lectins, which are hard to break down. But soaking, sprouting and cooking beans and legumes can neutralize the lectins and make consuming these foods perfectly safe.

Additionally, some people may have natural sensitivity to beans and legumes, which can cause an inflammatory response. Therefore, it's important to determine how your body responds to each of these foods for yourself.

Ingredients:

- 10 cups of water
- 5 cups vegetable stock (sub chicken stock if you prefer)
- 6 tbsp coconut oil / Butter
- 3 stalks celery
- 1 can diced tomatoes
- 3 cups French lentils (dry)
- 1 yellow onion
- 1 bunch Swiss chard
- 1 butternut squash
- 3 tbsp curry powder
- 2 tbsp turmeric
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 sprig fresh thyme
- Salt and pepper to taste

[20] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/16712775/>

Savory Lentil Soup With Turmeric

Preparation:

- Pour 10 cups of water and 5 cups of stock into a large pot, on medium heat.
- Dice celery and onion.
- Peel butternut squash, slice in half, remove seeds and pulp, dice.
- Chop Swiss chard into small strips.
- Rinse lentils and remove any stones.
- Add celery, onions, squash, chard, diced tomatoes, and lentils to pot.
- Add curry powder, turmeric, thyme, salt, pepper, bayleaf, and coconut oil.
- Once the water begins to boil, bring the heat down to a simmer and cover the pot.
- Cook for 3 hours, stirring every 30 minutes.
- Enjoy!

**Want to know a secret to make this soup even more delicious and nutritious? Add a half-teaspoon of coconut oil and a pinch of crushed red pepper to each bowl for serving.*

Rustic Rosemary Potatoes

Potatoes are a great carb substitute for inflammatory grains, and rosemary is — as we mentioned earlier — an anti-inflammatory superstar

The humble potato has fallen in popularity in recent years, due to the interest in low-carb foods. But the fiber, vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals it provides can help ward off disease and provide many health benefits

Potatoes also contain Vitamin C and Quercetin, which have anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects. Enjoy with the skin left on the potatoes to ensure you get all the nutritional value from the vitamins, minerals, and fiber that is contained mostly in the skin.

Ingredients:

- 1 bag tri-color baby potatoes (sub your potato of choice, around 2 lbs)
- 1 tbsp fresh minced garlic, about 3-4 cloves
- 2-3 sprigs rosemary
- 1 bunch parsley, chopped (optional)
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil or avocado oil
- 1 1/4 tsp sea salt
- 1/2 tsp fresh black pepper

**Option to add or sub Za'atar for one of the above spices. Za'atar is a Middle Eastern spice mix, containing Oregano and Sumac (among other spices). Oregano packs the antioxidants Thymol, Carvacrol, Limonene, Terpinene, Ocimene, and Caryophyllene; and Sumac contains a wide array of chemical compounds with potent antioxidant activity, including tannins, anthocyanins, and flavonoids.*

Preparation:

- Preheat the oven to 400° F. Line a half-sheet pan with parchment paper and set aside.
- Rinse the potatoes under cold water, scrub clean. Pat dry with a few sheets of paper towels before slicing into halves.
- Add to a large mixing bowl with the garlic, rosemary, parsley, salt, pepper, and olive oil. Using a spoon or a pair of tongs, thoroughly toss around until evenly coated.
- Transfer the potatoes to a sheet pan and spread out into one layer. Potatoes need breathing room on the pan so they can brown and crisp up. Do not overcrowd.
- Roast for about 45-50 minutes or until crisp and tender, turning and shaking them a few times during cooking to ensure even browning.
- Allow to cool slightly and serve immediately. Enjoy!

Massaged Kale With Tangy Carrot-Ginger Dressing

People have used ginger in cooking and medicine since ancient times. It's a popular home remedy for nausea, stomach pain, and—you guessed it, inflammation

As we mentioned earlier, ginger has anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, antiviral, and a whole host of other healthful properties.

The showstopper of this recipe is definitely the tangy carrot-ginger dressing, but let's not forget about the importance of texture. Aside from massaging the kale—which will have you feeling as replenished as it sounds—we've included crunchy watermelon radishes and other raw vegetables, as well as creamy avocado and crispy pepitas.

Are you hungry yet?

Ingredients:

- 1 bunch curly kale, stems removed, leaves torn (Sub preferred green)
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1/2 tsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 watermelon radish, very thinly sliced
- 1 small beet, grated
- 1 small carrot, grated
- 1/4 cup pepitas, toasted
- 1 tsp sesame seeds
- 1 avocado, cubed
- 2 tbsp dried cranberries or cherries
- Sea salt & black pepper to taste
- Red chili flakes to taste

For the Carrot-Ginger Dressing:

- 1/2 cup chopped roasted carrots, from 3/4 cup raw carrots
- 1/3 to 1/2 cup water
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp rice vinegar
- 2 teaspoons ginger, minced
- 1/4 tsp sea salt

Massaged Kale With Tangy Carrot-Ginger Dressing

Preparation:

- Preheat the oven to 400° F and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
- Toss the carrots with a drizzle of olive oil and sprinkle with pinches of salt and pepper. Place the carrots for the dressing on the baking sheet to roast. Roast for 25 to minutes, or until the carrots are soft.
- Transfer the carrots to a blender and add the water, olive oil, rice vinegar, ginger, and salt. Blend the dressing until smooth and chill in the fridge until ready to use.
- Place the kale leaves into a large bowl and drizzle with the lemon juice, ½ teaspoon of olive oil, and a few pinches of salt. Use your hands to massage the leaves until they become soft and wilted and reduce in the bowl by about half.
- Add the carrot, beet, watermelon radish, half of the cubed avocado, cranberries, pepitas, a few more good pinches of salt and a few grinds of pepper, and toss.
- Drizzle generously with the carrot-ginger dressing.
- Top with the remaining avocado, more dressing, and sprinkle with the sesame seeds.
- Season to taste and serve. Thank us later.

Saffron Turmeric Vegetable Curry

Turmeric and ginger are huge anti-inflammatory hitters. Turmeric contains curcumin, a bright yellow chemical produced by plants of the *Curcuma longa* species and a potent anti-inflammatory and antioxidant

Unfortunately, most of the curcumin ingested gets metabolized by the digestive enzymes in the stomach, intestines and liver before it can be absorbed by the body. Luckily, there are three easy steps you can take when cooking with turmeric to make the curcumin more readily bioavailable – and lucky for us, all of these steps are easily incorporated into curry!

The first being, add pepper! A compound of black pepper, piperine, has been shown to make curcumin more bioavailable. Piperine acts like a bodyguard for curcumin to digestive enzymes, and thus increases its absorption.

Curcumin has a low solubility, which is why it plays hard-to-get when it comes to its bioavailability. A great way to increase this, is to heat it up! Curcuminoids are lipophilic, which means they work well with healthy fats – attaching to them. This is why curries that use coconut milk are a winning combo. Any exposure curcumin gets to heat increases its solubility in water. [21]

Remember: spices are transformed by heat! Heat activates their compounds and is the key to releasing their best effect.

These three simple steps are easily done at home and incorporated into infinite curries. In this easy and delicious way, you can boost your body's ability to absorb all the benefits of this amazing super spice!

This recipe is so simple and yet so flavorful, it will have you feeling like a top chef

[21] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330983787_Temperature_Effects_on_Thermodynamic_Parameters_and_Solubility_of_Curcumin_OW_Nanodispersions_Using_Different_Thermodynamic_Models

Saffron Turmeric Vegetable Curry

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp coconut oil
- 1 Thai chili, diced (fresno, jalapeño or serrano work too)
- 1 large shallot, diced (sub 1 yellow onion)
- 1-2 tbsp fresh G=ginger, grated or minced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1-2 tbsp ceylon cinnamon
- 1-2 tbsp garam masala

Saffron *(Amount varies based on the strength of the Saffron you have. We recommend Rumi Spice. While it's expensive, a little bit goes a really long way and it will last you for years!)*

- 1-2 tbsp turmeric
- 1 orange bell pepper
- 1 red or yellow bell pepper
- 1 bunch asparagus
- 1 16 oz. package Shiitake mushrooms
- 2 baby bok choy, leaves separated
- 2-4 tbsp Thai red curry paste (depending on how spicy you like it)
- 2 13 oz cans of coconut milk
- 2 limes
- 2 bunches cilantro or other fresh herb
- 4 green onion stalks, chopped or another sliced chili pepper to serve

Saffron Turmeric Vegetable Curry

Preparation:

- Take a big dutch oven or pot with a lid and melt the coconut oil over medium heat. Add in Thai chili, shallot, ginger, Garam Masala, cinnamon, saffron and turmeric and let cook until translucent and soft, but not burnt (3-5 minutes).
- Add in garlic and let cook for 1 minute more. Add asparagus, bell peppers and mushrooms, juice of 1 lime, and a few teaspoons of sea salt. Stir to combine. Let cook for 5 minutes.
- Add in Thai red curry paste and stir to combine. Add in bok choy and let everything cook for 5 minutes more (stirring occasionally to prevent burning).
- Pour in two cans of coconut milk and cover for 10 minutes over medium-low heat (you don't want it to boil).
- Taste curry and season appropriately with more sea salt, pepper, lime juice or more curry paste as you prefer.
- Continue to cook covered (no more than 15-20 minutes total)
- Serve over rice or kelp noodles and top with fresh herb of choice, green onions or sliced chili pepper. Delight in the layers of flavor

Coconut Lime Fruit Salad

Fruit salad is an age old classic. Considered a dessert by some, what could be sweeter than enjoying this antioxidant-packed rainbow punch? Mix and match your favorite fruits or try our antioxidant big hitter suggestions below.

And, if you really want to get fancy about it, top with a little coconut cream or shredded coconut for an extra level of texture. This recipe is simply delicious!

Ingredients:

- 1 pack (or 4-6 oz) blueberries
- 1 pack blackberries
- 1 pack raspberries
- 1 pack strawberries
- 1-2 large oranges, sliced
- 2 handfuls (or 4-6 oz) cherries, sliced and pitted (sub grapes)
- 1/2 pineapple, cubed
- 2 bunches mint, washed and sliced into ribbons
- 1 lime, zested and juiced

Preparation:

- Rinse/wash/soak all of the berries and cherries. Pat dry.
- Slice strawberries into bitesize halves or quarters.
- Peel and slice oranges.
- Slice and pit cherries.
- Cube 1/2 pineapple.
- Zest and juice 1 lime.
- Toss all of the fruit together in a large mixing bowl. Fold in mint ribbons and lime zest. Cover in lime juice. Toss to evenly coat.
- Option to whip up some coconut cream (add vanilla powder, vanilla extract and a pinch of salt) and serve on top or sprinkle with unsweetened shredded coconut for a toasty crunch.
- Relish the fruits of your labor!

Irresistible Dark Chocolate Pudding

Cacao has roots deep in our ancestral lineage. People have been enjoying cacao as far back as 5,000 years ago! And its reputation is not simply one of guilty pleasure but one linked with robust health. In its purest form, dark chocolate is rich in minerals, such as iron, magnesium, and zinc.

This treat is made using cacao powder. Is there anything better than something that feels like a cheat but is actually really good for you? We present to you, our rich Irresistible Dark Chocolate Pudding. It's creamy, it's fluffy, it's chocolatey, and oh-so-divine

Ingredients:

- 1 medium avocado
- 1 tbsp raw unsweetened cacao powder (make sure there is nothing added! Just raw cacao)
- 3 tbsp raw honey
- 5 tbsp coconut milk
- 1 handful pistachios, chopped

Preparation:

- Cut open the avocado and scoop out the pit. Cut it into large quarters and put in the blender.
- Add the cocoa, honey, and coconut milk. Blend, starting on low and then moving to high speed until smooth.
- If the avocado is larger, you will need a bit more of each ingredient. If it is too thick, drizzle in a bit more coconut milk. Add more cocoa or honey to taste.
- Refrigerate the pudding and serve cold. Top with pistachios for an extra antioxidant zing! Option to serve with coconut cream. Savor!

Conclusion

We hope you've enjoyed our top 11 herbal allies for combating inflammation and 10 antioxidant-packed recipes! Now see if you can incorporate two of our plant friends and two of our recipes into your regimen this week.

Go easy on yourself, get quiet, and listen to your body. Integrate whatever feels right from this guide and leave the rest. We hope any changes you make will leave you feeling healthier and lighter.

And don't forget, we are of this earth and created from nature. It stands to reason that the truest, purest medicine would stem from the natural world.

Nourishing your body is an act of self-care, and that involves radical self love. Celebrate yourself and your being, and open up your awareness by testing out some of the practical herbal remedies and foods we've named in this guide.

Of course, we all have a lot more to learn... So for now, stay curious.