



**HEALTH TIP:** Amla is loaded with chromium which helps combat bad cholesterol



Ginger reduces nausea and vomiting by blocking excess serotonin and vagus nerve activation in the stomach

# Power up your plate

Nutritionists pick the best superfoods you can include in your diet this year

Nasrin Modak Siddiqi  
mirrorfeedback@timesgroup.com

TWEETS @MumbaiMirror

**A**t the beginning of the New Year, as people — driven by resolutions — rush to rejig their diets and to include healthier alternatives, superfoods seem to be the hot favourite. "In the new year, do not look for new superfoods. Instead, go for sustainable ones. It is not only great for your body, but you can take pride in the fact that your choice will also become a better source of income for our farmers. Think global, but act local," says dietician Beena Chedda.

Mirror asked nutritionists to recommend 10 superfoods you should be looking to incorporate in your diet this year, and here they are:

## Peanuts



### Rich in

Fibre, vitamins, protein, fat and minerals

### Superfood because

"Underrated but extremely versatile, peanuts are one of the best sources of plant protein (30g of natural peanut butter provides nearly the same amount of protein as four egg whites). It is grown locally (so is pocket-friendly), and can be consumed by vegetarians, vegans and those on gluten-free diets too. Peanuts contain mono and polyunsaturated fats, thus consuming peanuts or peanut butter on a daily basis can contribute to heart health and healthy LDL cholesterol levels. A word of caution while selecting this superfood — while many flavoured peanut packs come loaded with sugar, salt and added harmful fats, the best kinds are peanuts that are simply dry-roasted to preserve the nutrition," says Anika Kukreja, nutritionist and co-founder of The Butternut Co.

### Ways to eat it

Dry-roasted as snacks; churned into peanut butter; or add to cereals, granola, salads or make a trail-mix with other nuts and berries

### Best time to have it

Pre/post a workout

## Flaxseed

### Rich in

Protein, fibre and Omega-3 fatty acid, alpha-linolenic acid, B vitamins, antioxidants, and cancer-fighting lignans

### Superfood because

"These tiny, nutritional powerhouses contain a high content of lignans (polyphenols with anti-inflammatory properties). Flaxseed helps with digestion and constipation; lowers blood pressure and bad cholesterol; and improves good cholesterol by increasing the amount of fat excreted through bowel movements. It also helps with increasing insulin sensitivity and provides satiety. Flaxseeds help balance pH levels and oil production, increasing the rate at which hair grows and enhancing its health. Flaxseeds soothe the scalp and help calm the sebaceous glands, so they produce the right amount of oil for healthy hair growth. They are a good choice for the gluten-intolerant," says Janvi Chitalia, Holistic Nutritionist and Wellness Director, Body Cocoon.

### Ways to eat it

Roasted and ground. They are even more beneficial when had sprouted.

### Best time to have it

Any time. Best to grind it at home, 30 minutes before consumption

## Cereal-Pulse combination

### Rich in

Proteins, fibre, minerals, lipids, vitamins and enzymes

### Superfood because

"They are better-quality proteins (and cheaper too), which satiate you. They are also a great source of vitamins, minerals and soluble and insoluble fibre. Lente-carbohydrates of this combination blunt the sudden increase in blood

sugars, and control the metabolic complications of obesity too. All varieties of cereals, millets, dals and pulses are good, so just keep changing the types or consume them in different combinations. Since India is predominantly a vegetarian country, it's best to cash in on our local and traditional foodgrain, including millets which have a higher level of nutrients as compared to global superfoods,"

says Chhedda.

### Ways to eat it

Rice-dal, Khakhra moong/humus, rajma-chawal, nachni/Rajgeera/oats moong dal pancakes, idli/dosa sambhar

### Best time to have it

As main meals and in-between snacks

## Sattu (toasted chana and barley)

### Rich in

Soluble fibre, protein and iron

### Superfood because

"It's natural, inexpensive and has high-quality protein. The dry-roasting locks in all the vital nutrients. This indigenous protein source is

great to eat, as well as consume as a cooling drink on a hot day. The drink is soluble-fibre-rich which improves digestion and cleanses the colon. The iron content keeps you energised, and the nutrients give you a glowing skin," says nutritionist Kejal Sheth.

### Ways to eat it

Make a sattu shot (1 tbsp Sattu powder, 1 tsp lemon juice, sliced chillies and a pinch of salt, with 100 ml of water)

### Best time to have it

Around noon

NEELSHANKAR





## Cassava

### Rich In

Resistant starch, potassium, fibre, Vitamin C, K and antioxidants

### Superfood because

"Contrary to its exotic name, the humble root crop Cassava has been a part of our menu for years. Its starch is used to make tapioca pearls (sabu daana). For starters, it is gluten-free and high in resistant starch (starch that bypasses digestion and has properties similar to soluble fibre); it also feeds the beneficial bacteria in the gut, which helps reduce inflammation and promotes digestive health. It contributes to better metabolic health and reduces the risk of obesity and Type II diabetes; it promotes collagen production and is great for improving skin condition. It is known to offer relief from conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis, stress, anxiety, high blood pressure, colon cancer, irritable bowel syndrome, cardiovascular disease, and Alzheimers," says Munmun Ganeriwal, nutritionist and fitness consultant, Yuktahaar.

### Ways to eat it

Like potatoes, you can boil it, steam it, fry it or cook it as a regular vegetable. Cassava flour is a great substitute for gluten-laden binding flours

### Best time to have it

Any time of the day

## Almonds

### Rich In

Fibre, zinc, protein, Vitamin E, magnesium, riboflavin, calcium and potassium.

### Superfood because

"It is a nutrient-dense, energy-packed snack-on-the-go which is also reasonably-priced, easily available, and tasty. Almonds also contain tryptophan, which is a mood-enhancer and promotes sound sleep. It is so versatile that it can be widely used in deserts, curries and snacks. It is extremely popular among those who follow Keto, vegan and gluten-free diets.

Eat 10 almonds every day to get silky hair, a supple skin and stronger bones. It helps in lowering LDL and increasing HDL and weight loss," says dietician Sheela Tanna.

### Ways to eat it

As almond milk, churned into butter or made into flour. Use it in Indian sweets, cakes, milkshakes, Kahwa or roast with salt and pepper. Or eat them plain

### Best time to have it

Mornings and as in-between snacks

## Pomegranate

### Rich In

Antioxidants and nutrients like Vitamin C, K, E, protein, fibre, folate and potassium.

### Superfood because

"Pomegranates are known to exhibit anti-viral and anti-tumour activity. They are rich in a polyphenol called ellagic acid that has a significant role in healing cancers, including prostate, by slowing the growth of tumour cells and binding with cancer molecules to make them inactive. Apart from that, pomegranate helps boost brain health, prevents degradation of cartilage, assists in the healing of diabetes, acidity, high blood-pressure and also exhibits anti-ageing and libido-boosting activity. In Indian tradition, it has been used as a medicine to heal multiple health problems," says Luke Coutinho, Holistic Lifestyle Coach, Integrative Medicine.

### Ways to eat it

As a drink, as salad dressing, in pancakes and muffins or as a smoothie

### Best time to have it

Any time, but always one or two hours before bed- time



GURJEEET SINGH DEVGUIN

## Moringa

### Rich In

Vitamins, minerals, amino acids

### Superfood because

"All parts of this plant -- including the pods (drumstick) and leaves -- are used for medicinal purposes. It is a superhit in the world of alternative healing, and is also known as a 'vitamin tree' for being so nutrient-dense. It has seven times the amount of vitamin C in oranges; four times as much calcium and double the amount of protein in milk; four times the vitamin A in carrots; and three times the potassium in bananas. It is rich in antioxidants and has more oxidant-radical absorbance capacity than goji berries, green tea, dark chocolate and acai berry. It has flavonoids, along with antioxidants, which help reduce inflammation. Moringa fights diabetes and helps lower cholesterol levels. It has all of the nine essential amino acids which makes it a complete protein," says Hetal Chheda, Holistic Nutritionist and Founder, Your Health Signature nutrition clinic.

### Ways to eat it

Toss some Moringa leaves in a salad or blend them into smoothies. You can also use powdered moringa leaves add it to soups to increase the nutrition content. It tastes bitter, so use honey to mask its taste

### Best time to have it

In the morning, with breakfast

## Kefir

### Rich In

Protein, calcium, Vitamin A, magnesium, Vitamin B2 and B12

### Superfood because

"Fermented and cultured foods like kefir are functional foods that actively promote optimal health. We learn about the food quality and its nutrients, but in the end, how these nutrients are absorbed by the body and the body's response to any external factors, is what matters the most. Probiotics enhance gut flora, which create a healthy environment in our body to improve the immune strength, and

manage inflammation and nutrient absorption. Kefir grain when added to milk, helps it to culture lactic acid and promote healthy bacteria. This can be regularly had as a drink. It's as easy — and has the same process — as making curd with culture," says nutritionist Geeta Dharmatti.

### Ways to eat it

As a drink, as salad dressing, in pancakes and muffins or as a smoothie

### Best time to have it

Any time, but always one or two hours before bedtime