

The eight surprising superfoods that will make you live longer

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You probably know you should be eating vitamin-rich kale, salmon and blueberries, but there are tons of other nutritional powerhouses on grocery-store shelves that you might not be aware of.

“There are many lesser-known ‘superfoods’ that deserve time in the spotlight,” says Brooklyn-based nutritionist Jackie Newgent, “many of which are full of excitement for your taste buds.”

Here are eight to try, in stores now.

Maca



This root grown in the mountains of Peru “contains a wealth of nutrients, including plant sterols [which can help lower cholesterol],” says nutritionist Jackie Newgent. And “it may play a role in reducing stress and boosting libido.”

How to enjoy it: Look for it mainly in a gelatinized or powdered form — “or as an ingredient in a handful of natural food products to boost their benefits,” Newgent says. Many blend the powder, which has a sweet, earthy taste, into smoothies. *\$6.99 for a 4-ounce bag at Whole Foods (locations at [WholeFoodsMarket.com](https://www.wholefoodsmarket.com)) or [VitaminShoppe.com](https://www.vitaminshoppe.com)*

Natto



These sticky fermented soybeans are packed with probiotics, which are great for gut health, digestion and immunity, says Nikita Kapur, registered nutritionist with Compass Nutrition in the Financial District. And, because of the fermentation process, “they contain a good amount of protein, calcium, as well as iron, potassium, zinc, magnesium and phosphorus.” Plus, they’re high in vitamin K, which is important for maintaining bone mineral density and heart health.

How to enjoy it: These pungent beans are an acquired taste, but with time, fans grow to love their cheeselike flavor. Eat them on their own or over rice with spicy karashi mustard. *\$2.15 for three packs at Sunrise Mart (locations at SunriseMart-NY.com)*

Horned melon



This juicy, spiky melon native to Africa “is a nutritional standout” that’s high in magnesium, iron, zinc and fiber, nutritionist Jackie Newgent says. “Much of its disease-fighting power seems to come from the edible seeds. So, plan to eat both the jellylike flesh and the seeds.”

How to enjoy it: Newgent recommended slicing the sweet fruit up like a cantaloupe and eating it over plain or vanilla Greek yogurt “or as a unique topping for grilled chicken or fish.” *\$5.99 each at Whole Foods (locations at WholeFoodsMarket.com)*

Coffee leaf tea



This nonbitter “tea” is made from the leaves of coffee plants. Like its relative, green tea, it’s high in antioxidants and moderately low in caffeine. “Arabica coffee leaves, specifically, contain significant amounts of a polyphenol called mangiferin, which has anti-inflammatory effects,” says nutritionist Jackie Newgent.

How to enjoy it: Steep bag and sip as you would any cup of tea. The plain version tastes sweet and earthy, similar to the taste of a light black tea, but without the bitterness. It also comes in flavors such as jasmine and Earl Grey. *\$12.99 for a box of 12 sachets at [WizeMonkey.com](https://www.wizemonkey.com)*

Sacha inchi seeds



They look like nuts, but they're actually the seeds of the sacha inchi tree, a plant native to South America and Southeast Asia. "They're just packed with healthy plant-based omega-3s," raves registered dietitian Karen Ansel, author of "Healing Superfoods for Anti-Aging: Stay Younger, Live Longer" (Hearst, out now). "In a quarter of a cup they have almost 5,000 milligrams of omega-3s; 5 grams of fiber and 8 grams of protein." That's 17 times more omega-3s per ounce than in salmon.

How to enjoy them: Snack on them on their own, though some say they carry a vaguely fishy aftertaste. \$6.99 for an 8-ounce bag at Trader Joe's (locations at [TraderJoes.com](https://www.traderjoes.com))

Star fruit



This tangy-sweet fruit grown in tropical climates is waxy on the outside and fleshy on the inside. Though it's rich in fiber and antioxidants, what makes this food really super is its vitamin C content — 76 percent of your daily recommended intake, says Laura Cipullo, a registered dietitian based near Union Square.

How to enjoy it: Cut it up and eat it raw on its own (the thin flesh is edible) or “add it sliced to a salad made with veggies or fruit for the decorative and nutrition component,” Cipullo says. \$2.49 each at Whole Foods (*locations at [WholeFoodsMarket.com](https://www.wholefoodsmarket.com)*)

Pitaya



Also known as dragon fruit, this colorful cactus has a kiwilike taste. It's rich in phytonutrients, good fatty acids, fiber and antioxidants, says Laura Cipullo, a registered dietitian based near Union Square.

How to enjoy it: Slice it open raw and scoop out the flesh for a refreshing and healthy treat, or look for frozen pitaya and make smoothies with it. *\$4 a pound at Hong Kong Supermarket, 157 Hester St.; 212-966-0337*

Cracked freekeh



“Move over, quinoa, and make room for freekeh,” says Laura Cipullo, a registered dietitian based near Union Square. Per serving, this ancient grain has 7 grams of protein, 8 grams of fiber and 90 percent of your daily value of manganese.

How to enjoy it: Boil it in water or broth, then add it to salads with vegetables, meat or fish for a wholesome, balanced lunch. \$6.69 for a 9-ounce bag at Whole Foods (locations at [WholeFoodsMarket.com](https://www.wholefoodsmarket.com))