



SUPERFOODS FOR RUNNERS

A healthy diet incorporating a variety of so-called 'superfoods' will help you improve your endurance, boost your energy and lower your weight and race times. Here are 8 of superfoods recommended for runners (and what makes them super!).

Text: Jaclyn Reuters

A runner's diet is central to performance and health. To improve run times, runners benefit from being lean and eating foods that provide energy and supportive nutrients.

'Superfoods' are foods that have numerous health-promoting substances in high concentrations. Runners are constantly exposing themselves to free radical damage every time they run. Therefore, they need to eat foods high in antioxidants to counter the free radicals before they cause irreversible damage.

Eating a nutritious diet is not only about foods containing carbohydrate, but also those that contain B vitamins that help release energy from foods to improve stamina and endurance. Staying trim is a bonus for runners, as it is easy for them to gain weight during off-peak seasons; so getting back into shape is always a struggle.

The guaranteed way to lose the excess weight is to eat the right foods that have the best combination of nutrients. Being a healthy runner starts from what you put into your mouth. Here are 8 superfoods to power up your run! **R**

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES/DAVID J. CREPP

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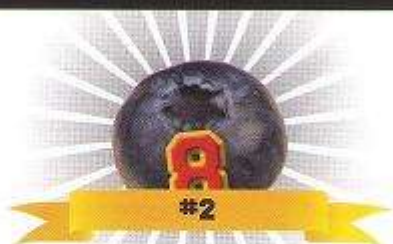
QUICK FACTS

- ▶ Did you know that a serving of sweet potato with the skin on has more fibre than oatmeal?
- ▶ Did you know that cooking the tomato increases its antioxidant activity by tenfold?
- ▶ Did you know that all the 8 superfoods listed are also beneficial for anti-aging?

TOP 8 SUPERFOODS



Brazil nuts are one of nature's richest source of selenium. Selenium is a powerful antioxidant that neutralises free radicals that runners are subjected to. Brazil nuts are also high in protein, healthy monounsaturated fats, dietary fibre and minerals such as potassium, magnesium, manganese and copper. These minerals help in muscle contraction and prevent muscle cramping. Brazil nuts are best enjoyed on its own, in a salad or as part of a cooked dish.



Blueberry is part of the vaccinium family. They are rich in potent anti-oxidants such as vitamins A and C, selenium and anthocyanins which are health-promoting phytochemicals. These antioxidants stimulate the brain to boost energy just before your run. Blueberries are great as a dessert on its own or together with cereals for a healthy breakfast.

BRAZIL NUTS WITH ROASTED ASPARAGUS

Serves 2

Ingredients

¼ cup Brazil nuts, toasted, chopped
200g asparagus
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons dry white wine
Salt to taste
Pepper to taste

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 180°C.
2. Line baking pan with foil.
3. Toss asparagus with 1 tablespoon of oil on baking pan. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.
4. Roast until asparagus is just tender for about 15 minutes.
5. Heat remaining oil in large pan over medium heat. Add asparagus, nuts, and wine in.
6. Toss for about 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Serve.

NUTRITION PANEL

Nutrient	Per Serving
Energy (kcal)	185
Protein (g)	5.3
Total Fat (g)	17
– Saturated Fat (g)	3.3
Cholesterol (mg)	0
Carbohydrate (g)	20
Dietary Fibre (g)	3.2
Sodium (mg)	4

HEALTHY BLUEBERRY PARFAIT

Serves 1

Ingredients

½ cup low fat yogurt
½ cup low fat granola
¼ cup blueberries
¼ cup strawberries, hulled and sliced
1 tablespoon honey

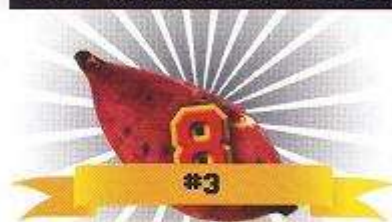
Directions

1. Prepare a tall glass.
2. Spoon 2 tablespoons of yoghurt into glass.
3. Spoon 2 tablespoons of granola above yoghurt.
4. Spoon ½ a tablespoon of honey.
5. Spoon 2 tablespoons of berries.
6. Repeat layers and serve.

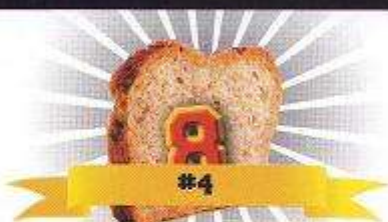
NUTRITION PANEL

Nutrient	Per Serving
Energy (kcal)	338
Protein (g)	14
Total Fat (g)	4.9
– Saturated Fat (g)	1.3
Cholesterol (mg)	7
Carbohydrate (g)	59.1
Dietary Fibre (g)	6.6
Sodium (mg)	120

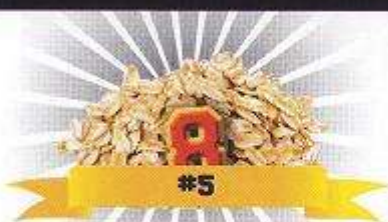
TOP 8 SUPERFOODS



Sweet potato is extremely high in beta carotene and carotenoids that are good for your skin and eyes. Its high fibre, notably soluble fibre content makes it a great weight-loss food. It makes you full faster and keeps you full longer while giving a boost of energy. It is also good post-run food as it replenishes your carbohydrate levels. Sweet potatoes are a healthy staple to go along with any meal or on its own as a snack.



Multigrain bread is a carbohydrate food that has a low glycemic index. It gives a sustained release of energy allowing you to run longer. It is high in fibre and contains many seeds such as flaxseed and sunflower seeds which are high in vitamin E. Vitamin E is not only good for skin health but is a powerful antioxidant to mop up free radicals, and assists muscle recovery. Multigrain bread can be eaten as a sandwich or a side dish to accompany a hearty bowl of soup.



Oatmeal is very high in soluble fibre and micro minerals: copper, zinc, manganese and magnesium. It is also a great source of B vitamins; thiamine, niacin, riboflavin, pantothenic acid which are necessary for releasing energy in foods. It is great for weight loss, not to mention cholesterol lowering. A hearty bowl of oatmeal with milk makes a great pre-run snack. It provides carbohydrates which are an instant source of energy plus the B vitamins that prolong stamina.

SWEET POTATO CHIPS

Serves 1

Ingredients

1 large sweet potato
 ½ tbsp olive oil
 ½ pinch dried oregano
 ½ pinch salt
 ½ pinch ground black pepper

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 175°C. Grease baking pan with olive oil.
2. Wash sweet potato well to remove soil and dirt.
3. Cut sweet potato into medium size pieces. Place the pieces in the baking pan.
4. Toss them with olive oil. Sprinkle oregano, salt and pepper.
5. Bake in oven for 60 minutes or until soft.

NUTRITION PANEL

Nutrient	Per Serving
Energy (kcal)	147
Protein (g)	2.5
Total Fat (g)	8.9
— Saturated Fat (g)	1.0
Cholesterol (mg)	0
Carbohydrate (g)	18.6
Dietary Fibre (g)	2.7
Sodium (mg)	208

CRUNCHY TURKEY SANDWICH

Serves 1

Ingredients

2 slices multigrain bread
 100g sliced turkey breast
 1 tsp Dijon mustard
 1 tsp walnuts
 1 tsp chopped fresh parsley
 1 tsp low fat mayonnaise (or Miracle Whip)
 ¼ green apple, thinly sliced

Directions

1. Mix the mustard, walnuts, and parsley into the mayonnaise.
2. Spread it on the 2 slices of bread
3. Add the turkey and apple on one slice and cover with remaining slice of bread.

NUTRITION PANEL

Nutrient	Per Serving
Energy (kcal)	370
Protein (g)	26.5
Total Fat (g)	12.9
— Saturated Fat (g)	1.6
Cholesterol (mg)	44
Carbohydrate (g)	36.9
Dietary Fibre (g)	4.9
Sodium (mg)	435

OATMEAL AND ALMONDS

Serves 1

Ingredients

¾ cup water
 ½ cup raw oatmeal
 1 cup soy milk
 10 almonds, chopped
 1 pinch cinnamon powder

Directions

1. Boil water and soy milk, add oatmeal and reduce heat to low.
2. Cook for 5 minutes.
3. Stir in almonds and cinnamon. Serve.

NUTRITION PANEL

Nutrient	Per Serving
Energy (kcal)	287
Protein (g)	15.8
Total Fat (g)	13.8
— Saturated Fat (g)	1.4
Cholesterol (mg)	0
Carbohydrate (g)	24.7
Dietary Fibre (g)	5.3
Sodium (mg)	6

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Salmon not only has great cardiovascular benefits due to its high omega-3 fatty acids content, but for runners, it's a natural anti-inflammatory food that repairs and protects the joints after you have exerted yourself. It is high in biological protein that stimulates muscle recovery. It is high in niacin, riboflavin, thiamine, phosphorus and magnesium which are important vitamins and minerals for runners to prevent cramping and to improve endurance. Salmon can be eaten as part of a salad or as main course.



Lentils are heart-healthy, high in protein, low in fat, high in soluble fibre making it a real super food. It has a low glycemic index which makes it great for prolonging energy levels, allowing you to pace yourself longer. Its high-fibre content controls appetite. For vegetarian runners, it is a good source of protein zinc, calcium and iron which are typically lacking in their diet. Lentils are great as a stew or as part of a salad.



Tomatoes are one of nature's most versatile and nutritious food. It is an excellent source of vitamin A and C, potassium, fibre and lycopene. Lycopene is a phytonutrient that is present in the pigment of the tomato. Its powerful antioxidant activity picks up free radicals and gets rid of it before it becomes harmful to the body. It is low in calories but packed with nutritional goodness. Tomatoes can be eaten in sauces, salads or just on its own as a snack.

ASIAN SALMON SALAD

Serves 1

Ingredients

150g salmon fillet
80g dried vermicelli
25g kai lan
25g snow peas
50g carrots, sliced
25g red pepper, sliced
25g canned baby corn, sliced
Olive or canola oil spray
2 tsp lemon juice
2 tsp Thai sweet chilli sauce
1½ teaspoon minced ginger
Pepper
1 tsp Chinese parsley

Directions

1. Boil vermicelli and all the vegetables for 3 minutes in hot water separately. Drain and set aside.
2. Spray a frying pan with oil and heat. Cook salmon over medium-low heat for 3 minutes on each side. Set aside.
3. Place cooked vermicelli and vegetables in a large bowl.
4. In a small bowl, mix lemon juice, Thai sweet chilli sauce and ginger. Add to the large bowl of ingredients and mix well to combine.
5. Serve on plate and top with salmon fillet. Season with freshly ground pepper and Chinese parsley.

NUTRITION PANEL

Nutrient	Per Serving
Energy (kcal)	624
Protein (g)	37.0
Total Fat (g)	16.0
— Saturated Fat (g)	3.3
Cholesterol (mg)	78
Carbohydrate (g)	65.0
Dietary Fibre (g)	5.7
Sodium (mg)	230

SIMPLE LENTILS STEW

Serves 1

Ingredients

50g lentils (dry weight)
Olive or canola oil spray
20g onion, finely chopped
1 tsp minced garlic
20g carrot, chopped
100ml vegetable stock
Salt
Black pepper
1 wholemeal bread roll

Directions

1. Place the lentils in a large saucepan and cover with plenty of cold water. Bring to the boil and simmer for about 40 minutes, until tender. Drain liquid.
2. Spray a pot with oil. Add onion, garlic and carrot to the pot and cook over medium heat for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Add in lentils and vegetable stock.
4. Season with salt and pepper to desired taste.
5. Bring to the boil, then simmer for 15 minutes. Add water if necessary.
6. Serve with bread roll.

NUTRITION PANEL

Nutrient	Per Serving
Energy (kcal)	275
Protein (g)	16.0
Total Fat (g)	6.9
— Saturated Fat (g)	1.0
Cholesterol (mg)	0
Carbohydrate (g)	39.0
Dietary Fibre (g)	9.6
Sodium (mg)	564

NEAPOLITAN SAUCE WITH PENNE

Serves 1

Ingredients

1 tbsp tomato paste
150g canned tomatoes
Olive or canola oil spray
20g onion, finely chopped
1 clove of garlic, finely chopped
50ml chicken stock
¼ tsp dried thyme
¼ tsp dried basil
¼ tsp dried oregano
1 bay leaf
Black pepper
¼ teaspoon sugar
100g penne pasta (cooked)
1 tbsp chives, chopped
1 tbsp of shredded mozzarella cheese (optional)

Directions

1. Spray a saucepan with oil and heat.
2. Add onion and garlic and cook until fragrant.
3. Add tomato paste and stir for 30 seconds.
4. Add canned tomatoes and stock. Bring to the boil.
5. Reduce heat, add in herbs, sugar and pepper. Simmer for 30 minutes.
6. Place penne pasta in a plate. Spoon the sauce over.
7. Garnish with chives and cheese.

NUTRITION PANEL

Nutrient	Per Serving
Energy (kcal)	248
Protein (g)	10.0
Total Fat (g)	7.5
— Saturated Fat (g)	1.9
Cholesterol (mg)	6
Carbohydrate (g)	34.8
Dietary Fibre (g)	6.6
Sodium (mg)	218