

Supporting Immunity with Nutrition

Healthy Shelf Stable Foods

The immune system is supported by nutrient dense foods. Many of these foods are found in the produce section, but you can stock your pantry with plenty of items to help reduce inflammation. Check out a few items below to help your immune system function at its best.

Nuts

Nuts are a great source of inflammation fighting antioxidants like vitamin A and vitamin E. Aim for one 1-ounce serving each day, and vary the type of nut you consume. Try almond butter on whole wheat toast, cashews in a stir fry or toasted pecans on a salad.

Seeds

Seeds, like sunflower, pepita (pumpkin), chia, hemp and flax, are rich in fiber, vitamins and minerals making them powerful antioxidants. Try them in salads, oatmeal, smoothies or plain!

Dried Beans and Legumes

Beans and legumes are a triple threat: fiber, protein and iron. Their nutrients will help support your immune response, and their shelf stability and versatility make them useful in the kitchen.

Whole Grains

Whole grains are high in minerals like vitamin E, B vitamins, zinc and magnesium. They are also high in phytochemicals that keep the immune system strong. Look for long-grain rice, whole forms of wheat like farro and wheatberries, and gluten free options like quinoa and wild rice.

Dried Fruit

If fresh isn't available, dried fruit still has plenty of antioxidant activity to support immunity. Choose varieties without added sugar and stick to a 1/4 c portion. Try dried cherries in a chopped salad, raisins mixed with roasted cauliflower or dried apples as a quick snack.

Zinc is shown to support immune function and the immune system response. Foods high in this important illness-fighting mineral will help you stay healthy. Add shelf-stable items like:

- Chickpeas, lentils and beans
- Nuts & seeds, especially cashews, almonds & pepitas
- Fortified whole-grain breakfast cereal
- Whole grains, like oats



A healthy
outside starts
on the inside.

– Robert Urich



QUINOA PILAF WITH

DRIED CHERRIES

- 1 T extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 small red onion, chopped
- 1 c uncooked quinoa, rinsed and drained
- 2 c low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- 1/2 tsp fine sea salt
- 2/3 c dried cherries
- 2/3 c sliced almonds, toasted

Heat oil in a pot over medium high heat. Add onion and cook, until softened, 2 to 3 minutes.

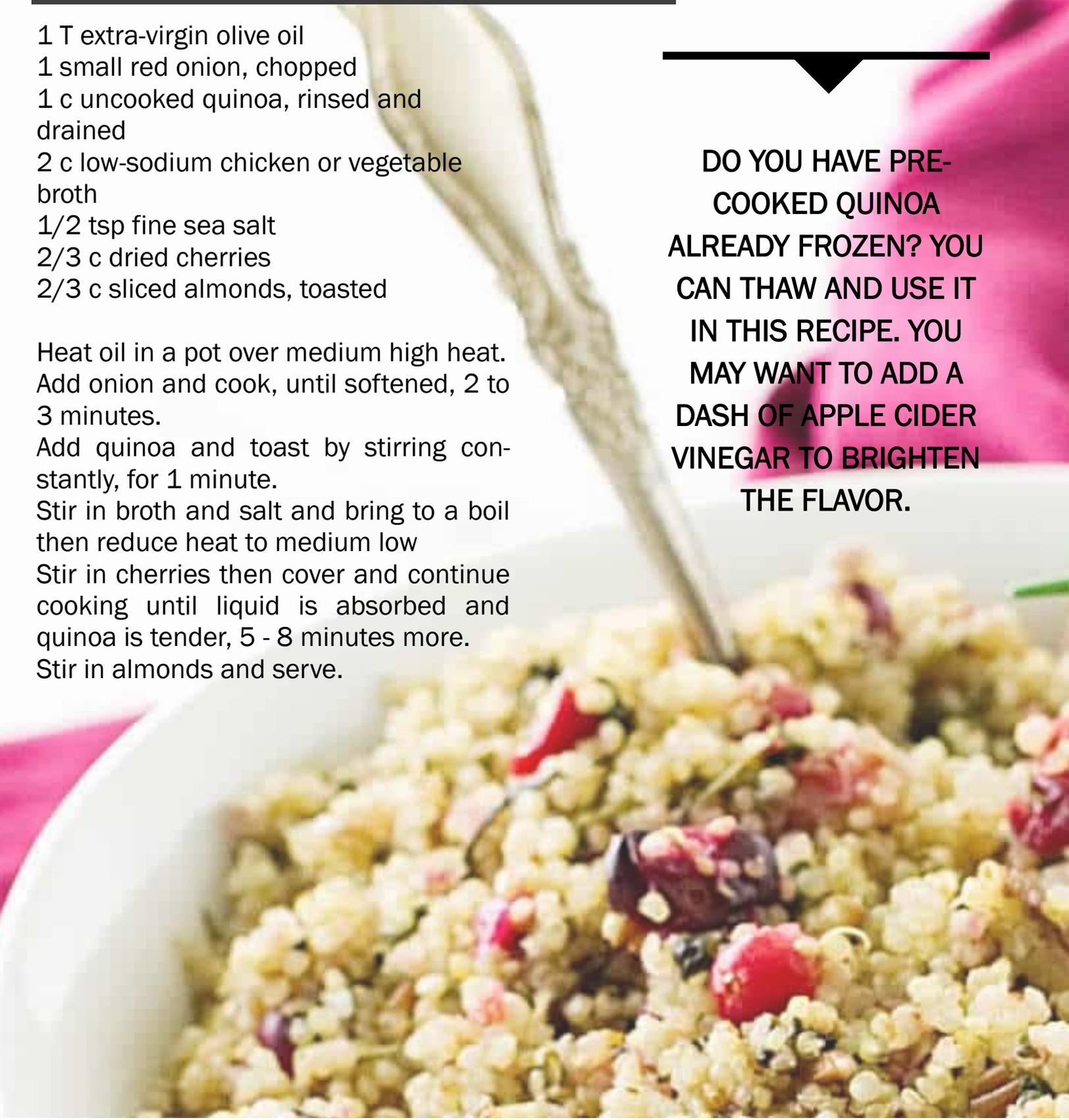
Add quinoa and toast by stirring constantly, for 1 minute.

Stir in broth and salt and bring to a boil then reduce heat to medium low

Stir in cherries then cover and continue cooking until liquid is absorbed and quinoa is tender, 5 - 8 minutes more.

Stir in almonds and serve.

DO YOU HAVE PRE-COOKED QUINOA ALREADY FROZEN? YOU CAN THAW AND USE IT IN THIS RECIPE. YOU MAY WANT TO ADD A DASH OF APPLE CIDER VINEGAR TO BRIGHTEN THE FLAVOR.



OVERNIGHT OATS

1 cup liquid such as dairy, almond, cashew, or coconut milk
2tsp chia seeds
1 cup rolled oats such as steel-cut, old fashioned, or quick

1. Add milk, oats and seeds to a container and stir well.
2. Cover and refrigerate overnight, or at least 5 hours.
3. Before eating, add additional liquid if thinner consistency is preferred.
4. Enjoy cold or microwave individual portion for 60–90 seconds.

5. Mix in additional items: Fruit, nuts, nut butter, seeds, granola, coconut flakes, vanilla extract.
6. Store in refrigerator for up to 4 days, 2 days if fresh fruit is included.

Try this recipe for an easy, quick, nutrient-dense breakfast or snack. Oats are a great source of whole grain rich in soluble fiber. Add the milk and a variety of nuts, seeds and fruit to provide a great balance of immunity boosting protein, complex carbohydrates and healthy fat.

Be sure to customize your toppings and get creative!

PUMPKIN YOGURT DIP

3/4 c canned pumpkin puree
1 c plain Greek yogurt
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp ground ginger
1/4 tsp ground nutmeg
1/8 tsp ground cloves (a pinch!)
1/4 tsp vanilla extract
Honey, maple syrup, or agave, if desired, to taste.

1. Heat the pumpkin purée over medium heat. Stir occasionally with a spatula, until it becomes fragrant, about 3 minutes.
2. Stir in the spices and allow the puree to cook 1 minute more.

3. Remove the pumpkin from the heat and cool for a few minutes.

4. Combine the pumpkin mixture, yogurt, and vanilla in a blender or food processor, or use a mixer and process until everything is fully combined. You may need to scrape down the sides with a spatula to make sure there are no pockets of yogurt or pumpkin!

5. Transfer the dip to a container or bowl, cover, and refrigerate for at least an hour to allow the flavors to meld. Serve and enjoy!

Craving something sweet? Combining antioxidant rich pumpkin and delicious spices with plain yogurt give you a new take on pumpkin pie!

Pair this fruit dip with apple and pear slices or as a spread for whole wheat bagels and toast.

EASY CROCKPOT

PUMPKIN CHILI

1 T olive oil
1 pound ground turkey
1 onion, chopped
14.5 oz. can no-salt diced tomatoes
15 oz. can pumpkin puree
15 oz. can chili beans
15 oz. black beans
3 T brown sugar
1 T pumpkin pie spice
1 ½ T chili powder

1. Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Once oil is hot, add ground turkey and chopped onion. Continue to cook until ground turkey is crumbly and no longer pink, then drain and discard any fat.

2. Transfer cooked turkey and onions to a slow cooker and stir in all remaining ingredients. Set crock pot to the low heat setting. Cover and cook for 3 hours.

IN LEIU OF GROUND TURKEY, THIS RECIPE PAIRS WELL WITH GROUND OR SHREDDED CHICKEN, OR MAKE IT VEGETARIAN AND ADD 1 C COOKED FARRO FOR TEXTURE.

Legumes and vegetables are loaded with immunity promoting vitamins and antioxidants to support your defenses. Pumpkin in chili might seem strange, but the flavor profiles work well in this great recipe of legumes and deep orange vegetables. Enjoy this easy savory and sweet twist on chili.

LENTIL CAKES

1 c dry brown lentils
2 1/2 c water
1/2 tsp salt
1 tsp pepper
1 T olive oil
1/2 medium onion, diced
1 carrot, diced
1 T soy sauce or tamari
3/4 c oats, finely ground
3/4 c breadcrumbs, whole wheat if possible

Cook lentils in the water with the salt for around 45 minutes, until soft. Sauté the onions and carrots in oil until soft, about 5 minutes. In a bowl combine the cooked ingredients with the pepper, soy sauce, oats and breadcrumbs.

While still warm, form the mixture into patties, it will make 8-10 burgers. Spray a large skillet with cooking spray and pan fry each burger for 1–2 minutes per side.

Serve in whole wheat pita bread, or on top of a bed of greens or in a grain bowl with your favorite toppings.

BANANA FLAX MUFFINS

1 c plain Greek yogurt
3 T almond milk/milk
3 mashed ripe bananas
2 T olive oil
1 large egg
1 tsp vanilla extract
3/4 c oats
1 c whole wheat flour
1/2 c flaxseed meal
1 1/2 tsp cinnamon
1/4 tsp salt
1/2 c dark chocolate chips
1/4 c walnuts or pecans

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Line a muffin tin with liners and spray the inside of the liners.

In a mixing bowl or blender, combine yogurt, milk, banana, oil, egg and vanilla. (If you used a blender, transfer to bowl now.) Stir in oats and allow to sit 5 minutes.

Add flour, flax, cinnamon, baking soda and salt. Stir until combined then fold in chocolate chips and nuts.

Divide batter in liners. Bake for 7 minutes at 400 F, then reduce heat (leaving door closed) to 350 F and bake 13–16 minutes until muffins are firm. Allow to cool 5 minutes before removing from pan.

These muffins are a great way to scratch an itch for something sweet. They are high in fiber and are a source of omega-3's from the added ground flaxseed. Try it with various nuts, or even add dried cherries instead of chocolate chips.