

Article 5: What are Superfoods?

“Superfood” is a term that many people are using, even if they do not know what it means. What is a superfood? Superfoods are defined in different ways by different sources and there is no official definition. The use of the term is not regulated in the food industry and it can be used for marketing purposes, so be cautious when shopping and look at the nutrition label for details. The Oxford dictionary defines superfoods as “nutrient-rich food considered to be especially beneficial for health and well-being.” Superfoods offer a range of health benefits including reduced fat storage, improved energy and ability to fight off infections and disease.

Superfoods are not meant to replace all other fruits and vegetables or to excuse unhealthy eating. No single food is a cure-all, so it is important to eat a balanced diet. Your overall health and risk for cancer and other chronic diseases is heavily tied to your diet and lifestyle. Obesity, commercial tobacco and alcohol use are still the leading causes of cancer and early death for American Indians (Espey, 2014). It is difficult to make changes in our eating habits if we deprive ourselves of certain foods. If we instead think about what we *should* be eating and slowly introduce healthier options, healthy eating is much easier. Pre-colonization diets were naturally healthy and packed with cancer-fighting foods. Here is a list of healthy Indigenous foods eaten by our ancestors you can “re”introduce into your diet:

- **Wild Rice:** whole grain packed with fiber, protein, folate, niacin, vitamins, other minerals and antioxidants to fight free radicals that cause cancer. Replace white rice with wild rice for a healthier meal.
- **Strawberries:** contain a powerful punch of ellagitannins, which can stop the growth of cervical and colon cancers. Strawberries make a healthy and simple mid-morning snack for adults and kids.
- **Sunflower seeds:** great source of vitamin E, which fights infection and keeps your heart healthy. Eat a handful a day or sneak it into other dishes, such as salads, stir fry, etc.
- **Salmon:** loaded with the healthy omega-3 fatty acids that are good for heart health. Serve on a bed of wild rice for your main dish at lunch or dinner.
- **Bison:** great beef alternative, with 50 fewer calories per serving and half the fat of 70% lean ground beef. Substitute bison for beef in burgers, stew, stir fry, tacos or any other dish where beef is used.

Kale and Strawberry Slaw (6-8 servings)

Recipe provided by Dream of Wild Health/Healthy Lifeways Cookbook

Ingredients

3 tbsp. - cider vinegar
2 tbsp. - honey
2 tsp. - Dijon mustard
1 ½ tsp. - poppy seeds
¼ tsp. - kosher salt

3 tbsp. - vegetable oil
1/3 C - finely diced red onion
2 bunches flat-leaf (Dino) kale
1 C - strawberries, sliced
Freshly ground black pepper

Directions

Place the vinegar, honey, mustard, poppy seeds, and salt in a large bowl, season with pepper, and whisk to combine. While whisking constantly, slowly add the oil until all of it is incorporated. Add the onion, stir to combine, and set aside. Wash and dry the kale. Cut out and discard the tough stems. Arrange the leaves into stacks, slice crosswise into ¼ inch ribbons, and add to the bowl with the dressing. Add strawberries to the bowl. Toss to combine. Let the salad sit for at least 15 minutes at room temperature and up to 1 day in the refrigerator for the flavors to develop. Toss again before serving.