

GLAMOUR HEALTH & DIET

5 Healthy Things to Make With Avocados (and 2 Calorie Traps to Avoid)

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I do love me some avocado—my favorite after-run breakfast these days is smooshed avocado on a piece of whole-grain toast with a little sprinkle of sea salt. Delish.

And you may already know that avocados come with heart-healthy benefits (they contain monounsaturated fats, which can help reduce "bad" cholesterol levels, lower your risk of heart disease and stroke, and help develop and maintain your cells). But it turns out that there are even more health benefits to these green ovals of goodness than meets the eye. Or, you know, *stomach*.

According to **Franci Cohen** (www.francicohen.com), avocados also contain phytonutrient compounds with anti-inflammatory properties—meaning they can help with conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis. And "The monounsaturated (good) fats in avocados have an amazing ability to reverse insulin resistance, thereby regulating blood sugar levels," she says. "Avocados also contain soluble fiber, which maintains steady blood sugar levels throughout the day." Cohen says that some studies have even suggested that the antioxidant glutathione that's found in avocados could help in preventing breast cancer; she also says that avocado intake can help with the absorption of vitamins and minerals of other foods by five times.

But, says Cohen, there are two high-calorie, high-fat occasions that you should beware of avocado:

When it's fried. Right, it seems like a no-brainer. But when you hear all these health benefits, head to the restaurant, and see something like "avocado fries" or "avocado tempura" on the menu, it's easy to justify ordering them. Cohen says that, while they may seem like healthy options, frying them cancels out their healthy benefits. "Just because the base of an appetizer is heart-healthy avocado, that doesn't negate the unhealthy trans-fats filtering into your bloodstream as you consume fried foods," she says.

When it's in a dairy- or mayo-based spread or dip. "Adding a little bit of avocado to these fatty dips does not magically transform them into being healthy; it just makes the dish appear healthier to diners," Cohen says. "In fact, you're simply adding additional fat from the avocado to an already calorically dense high-fat dip. Even though the avocado is good fat, it's still fat. Add an even fattier tortilla or potato chip as the dip vessel and you've found yourself in fat overload!"

What are your favorite ways to eat avocado?