

10 foods nutritionists always have in their kitchens

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LEMONS

Gaining entry into someone's fridge is an intimate experience. For example, we have a feeling the contents of our fridge are vastly different from that of a certified nutritionist, who is sure to stock her kitchen with only the best and healthiest foods. Curious to find out if that was the case, we asked three nutritionists for a list of foods they always have in their kitchens. Turns out, some foods we already have stocked, while others add to the long list of things we should have in our fridges.

Eggs

If you don't have always stock your fridge with a dozen eggs, now would be the time to change that.

"Proteins are essential to the building, maintenance, and repair of your body tissues, including your skin, internal organs, and muscles," said certified holistic nutritionist Elissa Goodman.

"Proteins are also major components of your immune system and hormones."

Many foods contain proteins, but Goodman says eggs contain "complete proteins" —in other words, they contain all of the essential amino acids. Goodman prefers her eggs organic pastured, which she boils each week for her daughter to take to school, or cooks over easy with coconut oil.

Nutritionist and personal trainer Franci Cohen agrees, saying hard boiled eggs are something you'll always find in her fridge, too.

"It's a filling, high protein, heart-healthy snack that keeps my kids satiated until dinner time, instead of combing through my pantry looking for sugary or salty snacks," she said.

Coconut oil

The one oil every nutritionist uses? Coconut oil. Certified nutritionist and Be Well by Kelly founder Kelly LeVeque said she always has it in her cabinet because the medium chain triglycerides (MCTs) help produce quick brain fuel, while the lauric acid kills candida and yeast overgrowth.

Goodman agrees, saying the MCTs help raise your body's metabolism, fight off pathogens, and may even serve as a natural treatment for Alzheimer's disease.

"MCTs are a primary source of ketone bodies, which act as an alternate source of brain fuel that can help prevent the brain atrophy associated with dementia," she said.

Another reason to choose coconut oil? It's easy on the digestive system and doesn't produce an insulin spike in your bloodstream. If you wanted a quick energy boost, Goodman suggests eating a spoonful of coconut oil, or adding it to your meal. LeVeque even said that coconut oil can increase 24-hour energy expenditure by as much as five per cent.

Fermented foods

Here's one thing we don't have in our kitchen, but should probably add soon: fermented foods. Goodman said that fermented foods are a necessity to maintaining a healthy gut, and just a quarter to half cup of it eaten with your meals can have a dramatic impact on your health. She names yogurt and kefir as two examples, but also suggests a variety of cultured and fermented foods, since each one provides different beneficial bacteria. She marinates tempeh to always have on hand and makes a coconut kefir yogurt.

Quinoa

If you're going to stock up on one grain, make it quinoa —at least, that's what Cohen does. "It's high in protein and fibre, and is so versatile," she said. "I mix it with beans and veggies for a heart salad, I use it to replace flour in muffins, and I often use it as a base for my gluten-free pizza crusts." She recommends having cooked quinoa in your fridge at all times, which makes healthy cooking super easy.

Wild salmon

LeVeque tells us she always has wild salmon in her fridge, mainly because of its health benefits. "It's one of the best food sources for omega-3 fatty acids and protein, plus it's full of vitamin D and selenium," she said. If stocking your fridge with fresh salmon is out of your price range, LeVeque said canned versions will work, too.

Leafy greens

On the veggie front, LeVeque said it's all about dark leafy greens, such as spinach and kale. "Kale is anti-inflammatory, chock full of antioxidants, vitamins A and C, fiber, and calcium," she said. "Sauté kale in olive oil to make a healthy side dish, or add a little to your morning smoothie." Spinach, on the other hand, is loaded with lutein, which keeps your eyes sparkling for the camera, said LeVeque. "It's also a great source of omega-3s, potassium, calcium, iron, magnesium, and vitamins B, C, and E."

Lemon

Looking for something that'll help you slim down and beat the water weight? LeVeque said you should always have a bag of lemons on hand. "Rich in vitamin C, this citrus fruit will help your body purge excess water weight and balance the sodium and potassium levels in your cells," she said. If you're like most people and probably don't enjoy biting into a fresh lemon, just add a slice to a mug of warm water in the morning, or squeeze some over your salad to help aid digestion.

Cucumber

Like lemons, LeVeque said cucumbers contain hydrating, nourishing, and astringent properties that are good for your health and your skin. "The enzymes cucumbers contain 'digest' damaged skin cells, remove dead skin cells safely, and add a fresh glow," LeVeque promises.

Grilled chicken breast

Cohen calls grilled chicken breast her "in a pinch" go-to. "If I'm on the run and need a healthy, filling food, I grab some grilled chicken right out of the fridge, wrap it in a lettuce leaf that I line with Dijon mustard, and I'm out the door," she said. It's a great source of lean protein, and a good option for fuelling up before a workout.

Wild blueberries

Lastly, LeVeque she keeps her kitchen stocked with another beautifying food: blueberries. They're antioxidant powerhouses, and also a great source of vitamin A — a.k.a your skin will love them. "Throw some blueberries in your chia seed pudding for a protein-packed breakfast, or add them to a spinach salad for lunch," LeVeque said.

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