



# Nutrition and Mental Health:

## An Introduction

We all know the importance of good nutrition for our physical health, but science has recently found a significant link between what we eat and how we feel. We now know that nutrition directly impacts mood and mental health.

For example, foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids (such as salmon and walnuts) and lean vegetable proteins (such as peas and lentils) increase the production of serotonin, a mood-boosting chemical that reduces depression and anxiety and improves overall cognitive functioning.

Conversely, artificial sweeteners (found in items such as sodas, fruit juices, and salad dressings) and processed foods (such as deli meats, ketchup, and white bread) have been found to increase depression, lethargy, and anxiety.

Learning about how our diet affects our mental health can get us more in touch with our emotions and can provide us with the tools to stabilize our mood and improve our overall mental health.

We believe that food has the power to heal, transform, and unite. This activity book contains a grocery list, two recipes, grocery store bingo for kids, and a daily food diary printout that we hope will inspire our community to **create hope** through food.

# You Feel What You Eat!

## A Beginner's Grocery List for Positive Mental Health

### Produce

- Leafy greens (i.e. spinach, romaine, turnip and mustard greens, and broccoli)
- Beets (high in folic acid)
- Onions and celery (good source of selenium)
- Kimchi, sauerkraut, or other fermented/pickled vegetables (contain probiotics)
- Avocados
- Brussels sprouts, kale, cabbage, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, squash, cauliflower
- Oranges, strawberries, raspberries, bananas, apples, mangos

\*\*Beware of fruit juices that typically remove the fibers that help process the fruit's natural sugar or contain artificial sweeteners

### Legumes

- Lean plant-based proteins (i.e. chick peas, lentils, and peas)
- Kidney beans, black-eyed peas, lima beans, black beans, and edamame

### Nuts and Seeds

- Walnuts, almonds, pistachios, and brazil nuts
- Sunflower seeds, flax seeds, chia seeds

\*\*Beware of added salt and oils when roasted. It's best to stick with raw, unsalted nuts and seeds.

### Grains

- Complex carbohydrates (i.e. whole-wheat products, bulgur, oats, brown and wild rice, and barley)
- Whole grain pastas (\*\*these can be more expensive, so instead you can buy white pasta and sprinkle Wheat Germ on your cooked pasta to "complete" the grain and reinstate its nutritional value!)
- Quinoa (a complete plant-based protein)
- Muesli cereal (\*\*only if unsweetened and whole-grain)

### Meat and Fish

- Lean proteins (i.e. turkey and chicken)
- Fish high in omega-3 fatty acids (i.e. salmon, cod, trout, tuna, herring, sardines, and mackerel)

### Dairy

- Eggs (another lean protein)
- Plain, unsweetened yogurt (contains active cultures for probiotics)

# Stress-Be-Gone Roasted Salmon with Celery and Bulgur Salad<sup>1</sup>

Serves 4

## INGREDIENTS

½ cup walnuts  
1 1½-pound piece skin-on salmon fillet  
Kosher salt  
½ cup coarse whole grain bulgur (not quick-cooking)  
2 bunches small white turnips (about 1½ pounds total)  
4 tablespoons olive oil, divided  
¼ cup plain Greek yogurt  
1 tablespoon white wine vinegar  
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice  
4 celery heart stalks, plus leaves for serving  
¼ preserved lemon, flesh removed, rind finely chopped  
¼ cup finely chopped golden raisins  
¼ cup parsley leaves

## DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°F. Toast walnuts on a small baking sheet, tossing once, until golden brown, 5-8 minutes. Let cool slightly, then finely chop.

Increase oven to 450°F. Season salmon with salt, then set aside. Cook bulgur according to package directions, then set aside.

Halve turnips (or cut into quarters if large). Toss in a large bowl with 1 tbsp. oil, then season with salt. Place cut side down in shallow baking dish. Cook until deep brown underneath, 15-20 minutes. Reduce oven to 325°F. Toss turnips and push them to one side of dish, then place salmon on the other side. Roast until fish is opaque and nearly cooked through, 12-15 minutes.

Whisk yogurt, vinegar, 2 tbsp. lemon juice, and 3 tbsp. oil in a medium bowl to combine. Add walnuts, celery, preserved lemon, and raisins, then toss to coat. Season with salt, and fold in bulgur.

To plate: arrange turnips on serving platter and drizzle with lemon juice. Scatter bulgur salad over platter. Break salmon into large pieces and arrange over bulgur salad. Top with celery leaves and parsley leaves; drizzle with more oil if desired.

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<sup>1</sup> Recipe adapted from *Bon Appétit Magazine*

# Grateful, Peaceful, and Veggieful Slow-Roasted Carrots with Lentils, Nuts, & Goat Cheese<sup>2</sup>

Serves 3 as a side dish

## INGREDIENTS

1 pound thin, large carrots  
2 tbsp. olive oil  
1 tbsp. honey  
Salt & pepper  
1 tbsp. butter  
1 tbsp. water  
3.5 oz. goat cheese  
A handful of nuts  
1 cup green lentils  
Water (or broth of your choice)  
1 tbsp. sweet balsamic (or date balsamic)  
Fresh thyme (or similar herb of choice)

## DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 300°F.

On a baking tray or oven-proof skillet, mix carrots with oil, honey, salt and pepper to taste, and roast in the oven for 45-60 min., until just about tender.

As the carrots roast, cover lentils with water (or broth) in a pot and bring to a boil. Let the lentils simmer for 30-40 min, until the lentils start cracking down the sides. Drain and set aside to cool.

Melt 1 tbsp. butter in 1 tbsp. water and add it to the carrots. Mix well. Increase oven to 400°F and bake carrots an additional 10-15 min., until they are perfectly golden and glazed. At the same time, place nuts on a small baking tray and roast in the oven for 8-12 minutes, tossing occasionally.

Meanwhile, add the lentils, balsamic, and a bit of extra butter to a pan. Fry the lentils for 5 minutes on medium-high heat until they are slightly caramelized. Season to taste.

Remove the carrots from the oven and gently transfer to a serving platter. Pour the lentils on top of the carrots and dress the dish with chunks of goat cheese, roasted chopped nuts, and fresh thyme.

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<sup>2</sup> Recipe adapted from *A Tasty Love Story* blog

# MOOD-BOOSTER GROCERY STORE BINGO!



# Food Diary

Time	What did I eat?	How did I feel before I ate?	How did I feel after I ate?

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