

# REINVENT YOUR SUMMER DIET

984 **T**rying to slim down and get healthy can sometimes take the fun out of summer. After all, who wants to skip sundowners and summery desserts when the temperatures soar? We'll share a little secret with you. You don't have to! This season you can smarten up your diet and enjoy your food - minimal effort required! To get you started, we've gathered this summer's healthiest eating treats. Yum!

Want to eat healthily *and* indulge this summer? Here are the latest fun ways to have your cake and eat it

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## #01 UPDATE YOUR FRIDGE

Move over kale – a whole new breed of amazing superfoods has arrived to help boost your diet. Offering greater nutritional benefits than their predecessors, hybrid fruit and vegetables (a cross of two varieties) are serious health winners – after all, two superfoods are better than one, right? 'A hybrid is simply the cross of two species, and is often bred with more health-giving benefits,' says Charlotte Watts, nutritional therapist and author of *The De-Stress Effect* (Hay House, £12.99). Combine kale with Brussels sprouts and you get the Flower Sprout (£1.50, Sainsbury's). With its flavoursome, dark green crinkled leaves, this brassica harnesses the detoxifying sulphur compounds of each vegetable, and is crammed with double the level of immunity-boosting vitamin C of traditional Brussels sprouts. The Broccoflower is also high on our summer radar. It's a cross between broccoli and cauliflower, (also known as the Romanesco cauliflower) and is super-versatile tossed into salads or eaten as a side dish. Summer is the perfect time to take advantage of the seasonal fruit on offer, so add a punnet of Plutots to your weekly shopping list (£3.99, ocado.com). This super-sweet plum-apricot hybrid is high in antioxidant anthocyanins, which help to keep skin looking youthful – and tastes delish too!



## #02

### HAVE A HEALTHY HAPPY HOUR

From margaritas to mojitos, we love summer cocktails as much as the next person – after all, happy hour al fresco is pretty much a prerequisite of sunshine-filled days. And if you're looking for a tippie with extra health benefits, look no further, as this year, plant-powered cocktails are hot in the mixology world. 'Obviously sugar and alcohol in excess aren't going to do you any favours. But using alcohol to extract the goodness from plants is no bad thing. Alcohol was, and still can be, the easiest way of dissolving medical constituents and dispersing them into your body quickly,' says Lottie Muir, author of *Wild Cocktails* (CICO Books, £16.99) and founder of The Midnight Apothecary roof-top cocktail bar in London, where she grows the ingredients for the bar's botanical drinks. In *Wild Cocktails*, Muir offers 300 recipes using home-grown and foraged edible flowers, fruits and herbs, including Woodland martini and Lavender gin fizz. And at Tanya's Raw Food Café ([tanyascafe.com](http://tanyascafe.com)) in London, mixologists blend spirits with botanicals to create superfood cocktail What The Doctor Ordered, a therapeutic blend of vodka, agave, lemon, chia, lavender and ginger bitters.



Lottie Muir's Fennel, tarragon and chard Collins cocktail...



... and The yarrow

## #03

### HIDE HEALTH IN SWEET TREATS

Dessert doesn't have to come off the menu, even if you've pledged to stick to a healthy summer diet. Healthy chefs are showing us that swapping a few standard cooking ingredients here and there for healthier alternatives can elevate puds to a whole new level, without ruining your efforts. It's easy to hide healthy foods in sweet treats – you just have to think outside the box!

Try using omega-3-rich avocado instead of butter, fibre-packed dates in place of sugar and naturally sweet carrots,

The beautiful Broccoflower, or Romanesco cauliflower



courgettes and parsnips to add texture and flavour to cakes and muffins. 'Vegetables don't have to be confined to savoury dishes,' says nutritional therapist Shani Shaker, ([superradiance.co.uk](http://superradiance.co.uk)). 'They contain a variety of key nutrients, very few calories, are anti-inflammatory and naturally boost fibre intake to help increase satiety and weight loss. It's hard to see the downside.'

## #04

### START SPROUTING

Raw foodists and health fans have long been sprouting seeds and pulses to power up their salads. But now sprouting has gone mainstream and a whole new wave of sprouted foods – from rice and grains to granola – is appearing. Sprouting raw nuts, seeds, legumes and grains yields a product that packs nutrients including fibre, protein and vitamins C and E into your

body. Rinsing and soaking seeds removes enzyme inhibitors allowing the seed to germinate. This process breaks down proteins into separate amino acids, and complex starches into simpler carbs, making them far easier to digest. Ease yourself into the trend by trying Good4u Super Sprouts (£1.25 for 50g, [tesco.com](http://tesco.com)), an antioxidant-rich mix of sprouted clover, broccoli, alfalfa and radish. Or try Planet Organic's Sprout Naked Oats or Sprouted Brown Rice (both £4.99 for 400g).

It's also a doddle to do yourself. 'Fill a jam jar one third full of what you want to sprout, then cover with water overnight. Drain and rinse the next day, repeat twice a day and your seeds will turn into sprouts,' says Shani. Throw into salads or warm lentil dishes for a quick meal shake-up. Bacterial contamination is a potential hazard of sprouting, though. 'Preparing sprouts with antimicrobial foods such as vinegar, garlic and onions can kill lurking pathogens,' says Shaker.

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#05

**GET CARB-SAVVY**

As much as we love quinoa and brown rice, we're always excited when we're introduced to new centrepiece ingredients. Teff, kañiwa and freekah grains have been hovering on the edges of nutrition circles for the past few years, but they're poised to become kitchen cupboard staples. And thanks to the health benefits they offer, these ancient (but new), ingredients are up there as our new favourite supergrains! Teff is a gluten-free African grain that's packed with fibre and iron. 'The flakes and flour are popular in baking, the grain can be steamed or boiled and used like rice, and it's also great as a porridge,' says nutritionist and TV chef Christine Bailey ([christinebailey.co.uk](http://christinebailey.co.uk)). Like quinoa, South American kañiwa is high in protein, while freekah, derived from unripe wheat and boasting a characteristic smoky flavour, is rich in iron, fibre and B vitamins. 'Both work well in salads and rice-style dishes,' says Bailey.

#06

**EAT LESS MEAT**

These days, it seems that everyone's getting on the meat-free bandwagon. Earlier this year, Beyoncé launched a new vegan meal delivery plan, while British food blogger Ella Woodward has seen her fame rapidly sky-rocket with her *Deliciously Ella* vegan blog and recipe book – also named *Deliciously Ella* (Yellow Kite, £20) – the fastest-selling cookery debut ever.

Indeed, there's a good reason to swap sausages for salad. Non-meat eaters generally boast better cardiovascular health, a lower risk of type 2 diabetes and a longer life expectancy than fully committed carnivores. But if going cold turkey isn't for you, summer is the perfect time to become a part-time vegetarian (also known as a flexitarian), and nosh on a mainly plant-based diet with the occasional meaty treat thrown in for good measure.

Research by Tesco reveals that Monday is the healthiest shopping day of the week, so try kicking off your diet with Meat-Free Monday – the initiative set up by the McCartney family to encourage Brits to eat less meat. Make pulses, tofu and quinoa the star ingredients on your plate to ensure you don't miss out on protein. 'Use these to whip up homemade veggie-based casseroles, curries and veggie sausages, burgers and roasts,' advises Shaker.

3

**SUMMER HEALTH BOOSTERS****STRAWBERRIES**

In season and packed with goodness, strawberries contain antioxidant phytonutrients and contain more vitamin C than oranges.

**COCONUT**

This tropical trooper is high in special fats called medium-chain triglycerides that help keep your metabolism revved up.

**TOMATOES**

Tomatoes contain the antioxidant lycopene, which partially acts as a natural sunscreen against harmful UV exposure.

Infused waters from Amelia Freer's book *Eat Nourish Glow*



#07

**PRIORITISE COLD-PRESSED**

You've probably already tried cold-pressed juices, but nowadays makers of snack bars, oils and protein shakes are also using the method to preserve their ingredients' nutritional goodness. Traditional manufacturing processes involve heating ingredients to destroy bacteria and prolong shelf-life, but this also kills off nutrients. 'Cold-pressing retains more of the nutritional benefits and greater flavour of ingredients,' says Watts. Munch on Creative Nature's Blissful Berry Snack Bar, (99p for 38g; [creativenaturesuperfoods.com](http://creativenaturesuperfoods.com)), or try Pulsin Hemp Protein (from £7.99; [pulsin.co.uk](http://pulsin.co.uk)), or Waitrose Cooks' Ingredients Virgin Cold-Pressed Coconut Oil (£5; [waitrose.com](http://waitrose.com)).

#08

**GO L'EAU**

We all know the benefits of drinking water, but you can make it even healthier by infusing water with fruit, herbs or spices for extra vitamins and minerals. 'Simply place fruit, herbs, and/or spices in a glass jug and muddle with a wooden spoon to release the juices,' says Shaker. Just add still or sparkling water and refrigerate. 'Sometimes I add a green tea bag and a slice of lemon to a jug of cold water and sip that throughout the day,' says nutritionist Amelia Freer, author of recipe book *Eat Nourish Glow* (Harper Thorsons, £16.99). 'Other combos include pineapple and sage, lime and basil, apple and rose, and watermelon and rosemary.' ■