

Our 7 Favorite Food Synergy Combinations With Recipes to Try

Posted on January 1, 2023 Updated on January 4, 2023



Food synergy is the collaboration of nutrients to create more outstanding positive health outcomes. It [implies](#) that the perfect mixture of food constituents operates in concert with the life of the organism eaten and the life of the organism eating it.

Why it's a good idea to look at Food Synergy in your daily food choices

Nutrition is the foundation of the future of medicine because you are what

you eat. As Aristotle famously said, ‘the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.’ We at the World Council for Health love the idea of food synergy as we firmly believe that together we are so much more compared to alone.

An essential finding of Food Synergy is that it is not so much the quantity of a food that is decisive but rather its combination with other fruits, vegetables, and herbs. Often, even the most minuscule amounts are enough to achieve a synergistic effect. If we were to eat only broccoli all day, just because it is considered particularly healthy, we would not be doing our bodies any good and could potentially become ill as a result. The more diverse range of foods we eat, the better chance we give ourselves to achieve optimum health. Recent discoveries have also pointed out the diversity of our food as a key to having a healthy microbiome as each of the thousand essential microorganisms in our gut lives off different foods.

Subscribe to World Council for Health’s newsletter to get up-to-date information about this

First Name

Last Name

Email *

First Name

Last Name

Your Email Address

One simple and straightforward example of food synergy that is easy to incorporate into our daily lives is that between green tea and lemon. In some countries, having lemon with your tea is normal. Not only does this

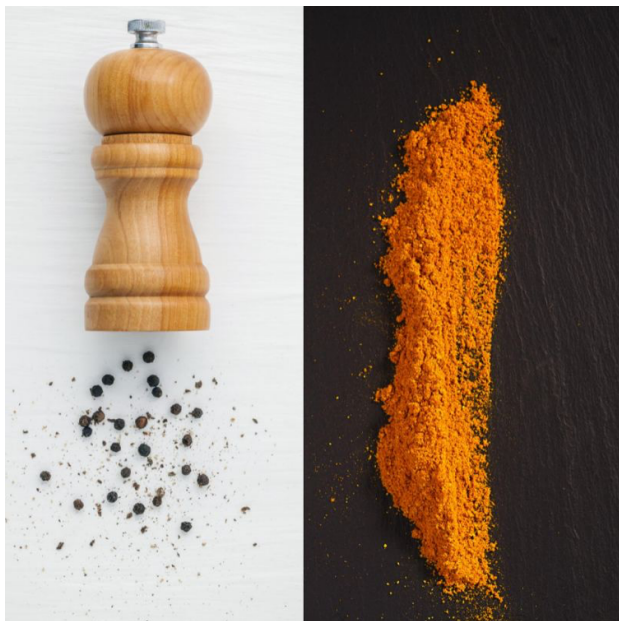
result in a better taste, but as studies have shown, the vitamin C in lemons boosts the phytochemical catechin within the green tea, making it last longer. This is because catechins are better absorbed in an acidic environment. Ordinarily, by the time the antioxidant catechin reaches our small intestine (where most of the nutrients from our food are absorbed), only 20% usually remains. [By adding lemon](#), 80% remains. So the next time you have tea, why not have it with a slice of tasty lemon?

If you live in England, oats are very commonly on the breakfast table. Having your porridge or muesli with a glass of orange juice on the side will have a hugely positive effect. Oats contain many phenols. They keep LDL, the so-called bad cholesterol, in check. Together with the vitamin C in orange juice, [this combination](#) can clean out our arteries much more effectively, reducing the risk of developing cardiovascular disease and aiding in preventing heart attacks.

Below you'll find seven of our favourite food synergy combinations along with recipes for you to try at home. If you make something, come back and let us in the comments. You can also share your own tips and recipes in the comments, too.

1. Turmeric and Black Pepper

Perhaps the most famous example of food synergy can be found by looking at Turmeric (from the Curcuma plant). Curcuma is a nutritious plant with healing properties in over 500 diseases, and over 5,000 studies are there to prove its medicinal effect. But did you know that adding black pepper (Piperine) can enhance its impact 1,000-fold? Nature has given us many powerful combinations freely available to us should we choose to benefit from them.



This yellow spice has been able to show its anti-inflammatory and cancer-preventive properties in a large number of studies. The active ingredient of the spice, curcumin, is a polyphenol. Since curcumin alone has poor bioavailability, meaning the body absorbs it poorly, it has been studied in combination with pepper. To everyone's surprise, the piperine in pepper increased bioavailability by a factor of 1,000. Interestingly, classic curry mixtures are always a combination of the two. Did the ancestors of the people in Asia already know about this connection?

Recipe for Golden Milk

TOTAL TIME: 20-30 minutes

Serves 2

Ingredients:

- 3 cups of oat milk (option to use almond milk, soya milk, or cow's milk)
- 1 heaped tsp turmeric (Curcuma) or 3 pieces of freshly grated turmeric
- 1 tsp of ginger (or 1.5-inch cubes knob of freshly grated ginger)

- 1 tsp of cardamom
- ½ tsp of vanilla
- ½ tsp nutmeg
- Pinch of black pepper
- Coconut oil (optional)
- Honey (optional)

Instructions:

Place all the ingredients in a pan together over low heat for 15-30 minutes. Be careful not to burn the milk. The longer you leave it the stronger the flavor will be and the more nutrients will be extracted if you use fresh turmeric and ginger.

When you are happy, run the mixture through a small sieve straight into a mug. You can now stir in ¼ tsp coconut oil and honey to sweeten if you like.

Enjoy.

2. Blueberries and Walnuts

For a long time, blueberries have been considered a so-called superfood. It is also known as the “brainberry.” In animal studies, it has been shown that they partially regenerate damaged brain cells. It reduces the risk of cardiovascular diseases and cancer. It prevents obesity and also inflammation (CRP). It serves as food for good intestinal bacteria and much more.

The individual ingredients alone make it a prime example of Food Synergy.

It contains a lot of polyphenols (anthocyanins, quercetin, catechins, etc.), carotenoids, fiber, folates, vitamins C and E, potassium, manganese, magnesium, iron, riboflavin, niacin, phytoestrogens and resveratrol.

Walnuts also prevent obesity and can significantly reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease (A handful daily by 51%!). It improves the so-called endothelial and likewise counteracts inflammation.



Research suggests that the anthocyanins in blueberries and the omega-3 fatty acids in walnuts synergistically improve our nerve cells' function, memory, and communication among cells.

Recipe for Blueberry and Walnut Muffins

PREP TIME: 15 minutes

COOK TIME: 20 minutes

TOTAL TIME: 35 minutes

Makes 12 muffins

You can make these muffins with fresh or frozen blueberries. Do not defrost frozen blueberries before using; stir the frozen blueberries into the batter as directed. Sprinkling 1 tablespoon of raw sugar on top of the muffins before baking gives a delicious sweet, crackly muffin tops. These muffins taste best after they've had time to cool completely.

Ingredients:

- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups plus 1 teaspoon white organic whole wheat flour or regular organic whole wheat flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp fine sea salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp ground cinnamon (optional)
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup melted coconut oil (if using, make sure all ingredients are room temperature) or extra-virgin olive oil
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup honey or maple syrup
- 2 eggs, preferably at room temperature
- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt*
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup (6 ounces) blueberries, fresh or frozen
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped walnuts
- 1 tbsp turbinado sugar (also called raw sugar) for sprinkling on top

Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400F/200C. If necessary, grease all 12 cups on your muffin tin with butter, coconut oil, or cooking spray, or use muffin paper cups.
2. In a large mixing bowl, combine 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups of flour with the baking powder, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon. Mix them with a whisk.
3. In a medium mixing bowl, combine the oil and honey or maple syrup and beat together with a whisk. Add the eggs and beat well, then add the yogurt and vanilla. Mix well. (If the coconut oil solidifies in contact with cold ingredients, gently warm the

mixture in a heatproof bowl over a pan of hot water.

4. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry and mix with a big spoon until combined. In a small bowl, toss the blueberries with the remaining 1 tsp flour (this helps prevent the blueberries from sinking to the bottom). Gently fold the blueberries and walnuts into the batter. The mixture will be thick, but don't worry.
5. Divide the batter evenly between the 12 muffin cups (I like using an ice cream scoop). Sprinkle the tops of the muffins with turbinado sugar. Bake the muffins for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the muffins are golden on top and a toothpick inserted into a muffin comes out clean.
6. Place the muffin tin on a cooling rack to cool. You might need to run a butter knife along the muffins' outer edge to loosen them from the pan. If you have leftover muffins, store them, covered, at room temperature for 2 days or in the refrigerator for up to 5 days. Freeze leftover muffins for up to 3 months.

NOTES:

GREEK YOGURT: After using a variety of fat percentages, the muffins have always turned out well. Higher-fat yogurt will yield a somewhat more rich muffin. You can also substitute plain (not Greek) yogurt, but your muffins might not rise relatively as high.

MAKE IT VEGAN: You can replace the eggs with flax “eggs.”(link to flax egg recipe in cookie recipe below) Replace the yogurt with a smaller amount of vegan buttermilk—mix $\frac{2}{3}$ cup non-dairy milk with two teaspoons vinegar. Let it rest for 5 minutes before adding it to the other liquid ingredients, or use 1 cup of vegan yogurt.

MAKE IT DAIRY FREE: See the buttermilk option above.

MAKE IT GLUTEN-FREE: Substitute an all-purpose gluten-free flour blend for whole wheat flour.

LEMON VARIATION: For lemon blueberry walnut muffins, whisk the zest of 1 medium lemon (about ½ tsp), preferably organic, into the liquid ingredients. You could even double that amount for extra-lemony muffins.

3. Oats and Oranges



While oatmeal is not always on the breakfast table in Germany, this tradition is much more common in England, gladly also with a glass of orange juice. This has a positive effect. Oats contain many phenols. They keep LDL, the so-called bad cholesterol, in check. Together with the vitamin C in orange juice, this combination can clean out our arteries much more effectively, reducing the risk of developing cardiovascular disease than either food could do alone. Again, crushing oats fresh yourself preserves the valuable ingredients best. Give our Cookie recipe below a go for another way of combining these ingredients.

Recipe for Gluten Free Vegan Orange Oatmeal

Chocolate Chip Cookies (V, GF, Dairy-Free)

TOTAL TIME: 35 minutes

Makes 20-30 cookies

Ingredients:

- 1 cup gluten free rolled oats,
- 1 cup gluten free oat flour – *if using homemade: make sure it's very finely ground, as coarse flour will result in crumbly cookies*
- ½ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¼ cup + 2 tbsp melted coconut oil
- ¼ cup coconut sugar
- ¼ cup pure maple syrup
- 2 'flax eggs' (*2 tablespoons ground flax or chia + 6 tbsp orange juice, whisked together, set for 15 minutes*)
- *2-3 tsp orange zest*
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- ¾ cup vegan chocolate chips
- ½ cup gluten free rolled oats

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F/175C. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or greased foil. Set aside for later.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together all the dry ingredients: oats, oat flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together all the wet ingredients: coconut oil, coconut sugar, maple syrup, flax eggs, orange zest, and

vanilla. Whisk until thoroughly combined and it resembles caramel.

4. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients. Whisk until thoroughly combined. Fold in the chocolate chips and oats.
5. Using a medium cookie scoop, scoop cookie dough onto the prepared baking sheet. Using a fork, flatten cookies into a round disc—they will not spread during baking. Optionally, press chocolate chips into the tops of the cookies.
6. Bake for 8-12 minutes. Using a flat, heatproof spatula, carefully lift cookies off the baking sheet and transfer them to a cooling rack. Allow cooling completely.

Enjoy!

4. Black Beans and Red Peppers

Iron deficiency is one of the most common nutrient deficiencies across the globe. It affects more women than men due to menstruation. An NDNS survey has shown that 25 percent of adult women do not get enough iron in their diet. It is widely understood that non-haem iron is more readily absorbed in the presence of vitamin C. Therefore, combining sources of Vitamin C, such as red peppers, with ingredients that contain iron, such as red peppers, will help your body absorb more iron than without.



Recipe for Chicken, Black Bean, and Red Pepper Chili

PREP TIME: 15 minutes

COOK TIME: 45 minutes

TOTAL TIME: 1 hour

Serves 2

Ingredients:

- 2 Chicken thighs on the bone (cooking meat on the bone keeps in more of the nutrients)
- 2 large onions
- 4 cloves of garlic
- Grated ginger (2-inch squared)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp coriander
- 2 tsp cumin
- 2 tsp smoked paprika
- ½ fresh chilli
- 2 red peppers
- 400g can of chopped tomatoes
- 400g can of Sweetcorn
- 400g can of Black Beans
- 1 cup of red wine
- 200g basmati Rice

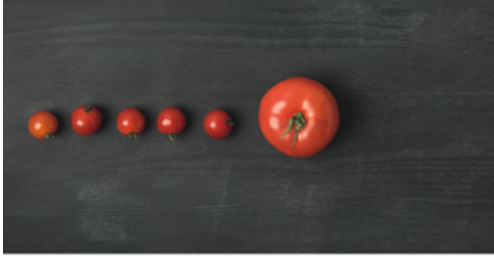
Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350F/180C
2. Pop the two chicken thighs in a baking dish with 2 tbsp water. Rub the top of the chicken with 1 tbsp olive oil, 1 tsp cumin, 1

- tsp of smoked paprika, and salt and black pepper.
3. Cover the dish with tin foil, pop it into the oven, and cook for 45 minutes.
 4. Meanwhile, heat the other tbsp of olive oil in a frying pan. Finely chop the onions and add these to the pan. Sweat for 5 minutes on low heat.
 5. Grate your ginger and finely chop the garlic and chili. Once the onions have been sweated, add the ginger, garlic, and chili, along with the remaining 1 tbsp coriander, 1 tsp cumin, and 1 tsp smoked paprika. Stir together for a few minutes.
 6. Chop your peppers into thin slices and add to the pan. Cook this mixture on low for 5 minutes until the peppers start to tender. Add the cup of red wine and reduce down.
 7. Drain and wash your black beans and sweetcorn and add to the frying pan along with the can of chopped tomatoes. Bring to a boil and cook for another 10 minutes. Add the spinach for an extra boost of Iron. Now turn the heat right down, add the spinach for an extra iron boost and simmer for 10 minutes.
 8. Add 200g of basmati rice to 400g of water and bring to a boil. Once brought to the spot, turn down and simmer until cooked, waiting for all the water to be absorbed but not so long that the rice burns. (Approx. 8-12 minutes).
 9. Check the chicken to see if it is cooked all the way through. There should be no blood or pink meat. If it is finished, pull it out of the oven.
 10. Taste the chilli, season with salt and pepper, and serve on the rice with a piece of chicken.

Option to serve with guacamole on the side (see below).

5. Tomatoes and Avocado



Do you also like to eat guacamole? And also tomatoes? As shown in the previous example, tomatoes can reduce the risk of cancer due to the lycopene and carotenoids they contain and the risk of cardiovascular disease. Then you're on your way to incorporating another healthy combination into your diet.

Since the fats in avocados increase the bioavailability of carotenoids, it is a tasty and healthy combination to have both on the plate. This is probably one of the reasons why the Mediterranean diet is always in the spotlight of nutrition research.

Recipe for Guacamole

PREP TIME: 10 minutes

TOTAL TIME: 10 minutes

Ingredients:

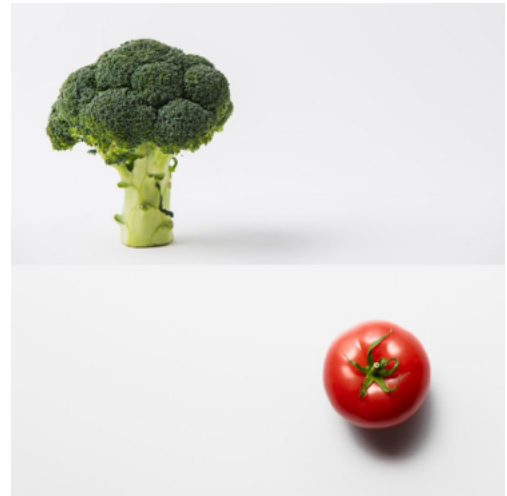
- 2 large avocados, mashed
- 1 tbsp minced shallot
- 1-3 cloves (1-3 tsp) minced garlic
- 2-4 Tbsp finely chopped fresh cilantro
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup diced roma or plum tomatoes (for a drier guac, remove the seeds or leave in if you'd like)
- Juice of $\frac{1}{2}$ large lime
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp pepper

Instructions:

1. In a medium-sized bowl, mash avocados with a fork
2. Add the minced shallot, minced garlic, cilantro, roma tomatoes, lime, salt, and pepper. Stir well to combine.
3. Serve with organic corn tortilla chips for dipping
4. If storing any guac, place it in a sealed container with the avocado pit in it; it will help keep it from oxidizing and browning. Keep refrigerated.

6. Broccoli and Tomatoes

As early as 2004, research was conducted to determine whether food can influence prostate cancer. It was found that tumours in rats grew much slower when the animals were fed tomatoes. This was due to the lycopene and carotenoids they contain. This was also the case with broccoli. A Food Synergy classic is the interaction of these two vegetables.



However, if the animals were given tomatoes and broccoli together, the effect increased significantly.

Recipe for Balsamic-Roasted Broccoli and Cherry Tomatoes

PREP TIME 5 minutes

COOKING TIME 30 MINUTES

TOTAL TIME 35 minutes

Serves 4

Ingredients:

- 450g broccoli crowns, cut into florets and stems sliced
- 175g cherry tomatoes, halved
- 3-6 garlic cloves, chopped (or halve the garlic cloves for a more subtle flavor)
- 2-3 Tbsp unrefined avocado oil or melted coconut oil

- 1-2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp acceptable ground sea salt
- freshly ground pepper to taste
- Fresh basil or oregano to garnish (optional)

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 400F/200C and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Place the broccoli, tomatoes, and garlic in a bowl. Drizzle with oil and vinegar and toss to combine. Spread out in a single layer on the pan and sprinkle with salt and pepper.
3. Roast for 30 minutes.
4. Serve hot or at room temperature. Garnish with fresh basil or oregano if you have it. Don't worry about it if you don't.

7. Apples and Chocolate

This title will gladden many a reader's hearts. But it is not quite as simple as eating a slice of apple with a bar of milk chocolate. One thing is sure: apples, especially red varieties such as "Rote Delicious," contain a lot of the antioxidant flavonoid quercetin, especially in the peel. The flavonoid quercetin alone has been shown to reduce the risk of allergies, heart attacks, Alzheimer's, and Parkinson's disease, as well as lung and prostate cancer.

When eating the peels of fruits and vegetables, make sure to buy organic quality whenever possible. Long-term random tests, such as those carried out by the magazine "Ökotest," show that organically grown fruit and vegetables are significantly less contaminated with pesticides than

conventionally grown produce.



Dark chocolate, on the other hand, and grapes, red wine, and tea contains abundant flavonoid catechin. A secondary plant substance that reduces the risk of developing atherosclerosis or cancer.

Together, catechin and quercetin develop an even greater potential. They loosen clumped blood cells (platelets) and therefore improve the health of the cardiovascular system by preventing clumping.

Recipe for Apple & Chocolate Crumble

PREP TIME 15 minutes

COOKING TIME 20 minutes

TOTAL TIME 35 minutes

Serves 4

Ingredients:

- 8 Large Apples (the following varieties contain the most quercetin – red delicious, gala, and golden delicious)
- 1 tsp ginger
- 1 tsp Cinnamon
- Juice of ½ lemon
- 2 tablespoons of sugar

- 1/2 cup oats
- 1/2 cup whole wheat flour (I prefer almond flour, personally)
- Pinch of salt
- 1.5 cups of cocoa powder
- ¾ cup of brown sugar
- 2/3 cup butter, cold and in pieces
- ½ cup dark chocolate chips/chunks

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350F/180C
2. Grease with an empty butter wrapper or a small amount of butter around the side of 9 inches ceramic or heatproof glass dish.
3. Wash, core, and cut apples in half. Cut in half again, so you have 4 quarters for each apple. Cut each piece into slices. Be sure to leave the peel on, as this is where most of the quercetin is.
4. Add to a pan with the 2 tbsp of sugar, cinnamon, ginger, and lemon juice Heat on low for 8 – 10 minutes, being careful not to burn.
5. Meanwhile, add the flour, salt, cocoa powder, and brown sugar to a mixing bowl and stir together. Add the butter and knead with your hands the butter and flour together. (You can also use a food processor if you prefer to keep your hands clean but be careful not to mix for too long; 30 seconds should be enough. At the last minute, stir through the choc chips/chunks.
6. Add the apple mixture to the bottom of a dish and then top it with the crumble topping.
7. Bake for 15-20 minutes