

bsmooth: smoothies

So often we rely on food as a source of comfort rather than a source of restoration. Kitchens serve as a place to grab a snack, to heat a packaged food in a microwave, to shovel in take-out, to display photos on the fridge. Yet it can be a sanctuary to nourish us at all levels. A place to go when we want to be at highest expression of health. Embrace your kitchen as a “farmacy” where one can replenish energy and heal.

Reclaim your kitchen and experiment with smoothies because:

1. they provide a platform for increasing the nutrient density and vitality in our daily diets
2. they are so quick to prepare that the excuses of not having time to eat well evaporates
3. they are portable
4. they are easy to digest since the blender has already done some of the work for you
5. they retain the fiber, unlike juices where the fiber is removed
6. they can serve as a carrier for additional nutritional powerhouses such as flax seed for regularity and omegas and probiotics for intestinal health.

Components of a smoothie include:

liquid 1 Cup

sweetener 2 Tablespoon

berries 1 Cup

greens 1-2 Cups

fat (optional) 1 Tablespoon

Smoothies are a canvas just waiting for your signature. Alter quantities to reflect your preferences and creativity.

LIQUID

Here is a great place to monitor calories if weight loss or maintenance is your goal. Options include:

“Milk”-Unsweetened almond, hemp, coconut (not condensed in can), and hazelnut “milk” provide good nutrition, contribute to creaminess and serve as a filling base for smoothies. I advise against soy milk as it is highly processed. (Mentally trace the soy “milk” back to its original source, the edamame or soybean. It has come too far from its original source to be deemed “minimally

processed”. Soy has also become so pervasive in processed foods that people are developing sensitivities from overexposure.) Unsweetened products allow us to manage and adapt the sweetness to our tastes and body’s needs.

Milk/yogurt-Cow’s milk often causes digestive distress and creates mucus so it is not the ideal option for most. If you handle it well, then add it for the base.

Coconut Water-Low in calories and high in potassium, coconut water is Nature’s Gatorade. Perfect for a post-workout option. *

Tea-Chamomile tea serves as a delightful liquid base for a smoothie especially when our nerves may be a bit frayed. Green tea contributes to the antioxidant quality of the smoothie. Peppermint tea enhances our energy levels. Simply make some for the purpose of the smoothie or use whatever you may have remaining from your tea break.

Water-Always a healthy choice, especially when calorie load is considered.

SWEETENER

Dates-Any fresh date delivers sweetness and health benefits of iron, minerals and vitamins. Dates minimize the effects of aging and aid in muscle repair following a strenuous workout.*

Agave(raw)-Agave is a controversial sweetener in that it is processed yet embraced by raw foodists in search of an effective and delicious liquid sweetener. It is a low-glycemic option so can be used by diabetics and sugar sensitive people. I save agave for raw desserts because I am cautious about its processing and would like to reserve its use for when no other sweetener would work nearly as well.

Maple syrup-With only 65% sucrose, maple syrup is less harmful to the body’s natural mineral balance than processed sugars.

Fruit (non-berry)-High-glycemic fruits such as pineapple, mango and orange do the job of sweetening the smoothies beautifully. They add fiber and of course nutrients.

Honey-I advise using raw local honey if you suffer from seasonal allergies. The honey acts like a homeopathic remedy, providing you with a minimal dose of pollen and in doing so, builds up an immune resistance.

BERRIES

Blueberries, raspberries, goji berries, strawberries, black berries all provide phytonutrients which aid in preventing numerous diseases including cancer. Fill your freezer with an assortment of organic berries when on sale because they can be pricey. It is important that you chose organic in this case since berries are exposed to high levels of chemicals and absorb the toxins readily through their fragile exteriors.

GREENS

I know.....let this concept seep in, allow the rebellion to pass and then surrender. Greens it is. In blending all ingredients to liquid, smoothies provide an opportunity to enhance your nutrition exponentially; we want to take advantage of any chance to increase our green intake for their uplifting, cleansing and alkalizing properties. Organic baby spinach alters the flavor the least although the hue will change to green. Rotate the greens to ensure coverage of all minerals and minimize excess oxalic acid intake. (Oxalic acid is naturally occurring in spinach, beet greens and swiss chard and depletes calcium from bones and teeth. It is Nature's reminder to include variety in our meals.) Bok choy, romaine and spinach have the least impact on flavor but try experiment with beet greens, broccoli, kale, watercress, arugula etc. Depending on the green, you may want to adjust the sweetener.

FROZEN BANANA (OR CUCUMBER!)

Peel a banana, cut into small chunks and place in a ziplock in the freezer. Take out a few pieces of frozen banana to add creaminess to the smoothie. Bananas are wonderful sources of potassium, replenishing our bodies after exertion. They do however constipate and add substantial calories so I have been replacing my banana with peeled cucumbers. I know.... Here comes the resistance but hang in there with me- creaminess without the heaviness and with the skin glow and thirst quenching qualities cucumbers deliver. See recipe below.

FAT (optional)

Smoothies are a great carrier for nutritional supplements such as ground flax seed for omegas and regularity.

If you need a smoothie to serve as a meal or you are striving to gain weight, then I would advise adding some additional form of fat into the base. Fats to consider are:

Avocado-Wonderful for the skin, avocados provide healthy fat and a rich, satisfying creaminess to the smoothie. I adore avocados eaten fresh with lime and himalayan pink salt so to use an avocado in a smoothie seems like a waste of the ecstasy of eating a avocado in its full glory. Your choice.

Coconut oil-This fat provides a tropical flavor and the mouthfeel of decadence. Coconut oil contains lauric acid which can only otherwise be found in human breast milk. The immune building components make this a great choice especially when paired with mango, pineapple etc. for an island indulgence.

Nuts/seeds-I recommend using raw almond butter or nuts and seeds themselves. Peanut butter is not a safe option for many given the legume's proclivity to mold. Nuts that have been roasted alter the health benefits of the nut itself and risk rancidity. Pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds for calcium, walnuts for omegas and brain health.....the options here are endless.

*Coconut water and dates have been covered extensively in another mailing. Contact me at bnourished@me.com if you did not receive it.

Pineapple-Cilantro Smoothie

Serves 2

2 cucumbers, peeled and chopped
1/2 pineapple, peeled and chopped
1 bunch cilantro, fresh
1/2 C coconut water
1 handful
spinach
2 Medjool dates
1 T vanilla extract

Blend all ingredients and enjoy.

adapted from Sarma Melngailis' Living Raw Food

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