

# Green foods for better health

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There are dozens of diets that promise better nutrition and rapid weight loss. But the simplest way to improve your health is to make like Kermit and go green.

## Asparagus

Asparagus is a source of the soluble fiber inulin, which can suppress your appetite. There's also an array of B vitamins in this popular vegetable, including B1, B2, B3 and B6. It also encourages digestive health and contains vitamin K, which acts as a natural diuretic.



## Avocado

Creamy, packed with potassium and folate, and delicious on toast, this tropical fruit is a great way to add healthier monounsaturated fats to your diet, which may lower harmful levels of cholesterol. For a simple riff on guacamole, try mashing an avocado with salt, pepper, hot sauce and a squeeze of lime.

## Green bell pepper

If you're tired of eating oranges for a heavy dose of vitamin C, look to green bell peppers, which provide almost 120 milligrams of vitamin C in one cup (chopped). That's well above the recommended 75 to 90 milligrams, plus you'll be getting 2.5 grams of fiber.



## Collard greens

These large, leafy greens are loaded with important vitamins and minerals, including vitamin A, folate and vitamin K—a nutrient important for blood and bone health. Try sautéing chopped collards with diced onion, garlic and bacon for a simple side.

## Edamame

A half cup of edamame provides almost 8 grams of protein, which helps to stave off hunger. It's a great staple of a low-calorie diet with only 95 calories per half cup.



## Jalapeno

Capsaicin found in jalapeno peppers has been linked to weight loss. Research shows that people eat less food overall when they're eating something spicy. Not to mention, you'll be reaching for your water glass more when you consume jalapenos.

## Pistachios

They take a little effort to crack open, but pistachios are worth it, as they contain the important brain nutrient vitamin B6 and 18 percent of your daily requirement of thiamine (vitamin B1). Try adding chopped pistachios to chocolate desserts—brownies, ice cream or tarts for color, crunch, flavor and nutrients.



## Pumpkin seeds

Full of zinc, antioxidant phytonutrients and protein, pumpkin seeds (sometimes called pepitas when they are out of their shells) have a nice crunch and a soft, chewy inside. Try roasting raw pepitas with olive oil, salt, ground coriander and pepper for an easy snack.

## Seaweed

Seaweed contains lots of protein and is one of the few non-animal sources of B12, making it an excellent food for vegetarians. Theory has it that it's great for weight loss, too. Wakame is a type of brown seaweed of ten used as a flavoring in soups and salads. A brownish pigment in wakame, fucoxanthin, promotes weight loss. That's what scientists concluded when obese rats lost 5 to 10 percent of their body weight when fucoxanthin was added to their diet.



## Snap peas

When you add a handful – about 1 cup – of snap peas to a salad, you're adding 2 grams of protein, 3 grams of natural sugar, 2 grams of fiber and no fat. Plus, you're getting the added benefits of vitamin C and B-complex vitamins.

## Spinach

Add a handful of raw spinach to salads, soups and smoothies, and you'll earn an extra dose of vitamins A, C, K and E, as well as minerals vital to muscle function, such as potassium and magnesium.



## Swiss chard

Swiss chard provides a slew of health benefits and can be purchased throughout the year. With fiber and anthocyanins, research suggests the leafy green vegetable can help prevent colon cancer. It's also very high in Vitamin A, C, E and k, along with fiber, magnesium, manganese, iron and potassium.