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8 foods that can improve your sex life

Feel sexier and get more satisfaction just from eating more of these

By Denise Schipani



Foods That Put You in the Mood

Food and sex: you need `em both, you want `em both—and, as it turns out, they're closely linked. A poor diet can lead to a lackluster sex life, while some foods have the power to make you feel sexier or prime your body for some mind-blowing booty. A healthy balance of vitamins and minerals keeps your endocrine system humming, which in turn regulates the production of the hormones estrogen and testosterone, essential for sexual desire and performance, says Cammi Balleck, PhD, a naturopathic physician and author of ***Making***

Happy Happen. "Enjoying an active sex life is essential to our wellbeing, and the foods we eat play a large role in ensuring we feel in the mood," she says. So you could call good food and good sex a positive feedback loop. Here, eight foods (plus one meal!) with proven power to up the sexy.

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Celery

It may seem like all this crunchy veggie has going for it is its low calorie count, but trust us, it's sexy, too. Celery contains chemicals called androsterone and adrostenal, which make us feel more sexually attractive, says Balleck. She also notes that celery contains a small amount of male hormones, which can boost female arousal. Need more? "Celery's balance of sodium and potassium make it an excellent diuretic," says Linda DeVillers, PhD, author of ***Simple Sexy Food: 101 Tasty Aphrodisiac Recipes and Sensual Tips to Stir Your Libido and Feed Your Love***. Translation: It can

help banish decidedly unsexy bloat.

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Lobster

Sure, part of its appeal is the special-occasion nature, not to mention all that licking of butter off your fingers. But you may eschew this crustacean in fear that a heavy, fatty meal will slow you down sexually. Turns out, lobster doesn't deserve its tag as a high-fat food (except when slathered in said butter!). In fact, it's a good source of lean protein, copper, zinc and selenium. Zinc, in particular, has been linked with a healthy male libido, says deVillers. Lobster is also chock full of the mineral phosphorus, which boosts *both* your sex drives, says Balleck. Plus, its concentration of essential fatty acids may

increase sensitivity in your sex organs.

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Leafy Green Veggies

It may not be easy being green, but it *is* sexy. Kale, spinach and other leafy greens are high in vitamin A, which is a great hormone-balancer because it supports proper endocrine function, says Balleck. "These foods also contain iodine, an essential mineral for proper function of your thyroid and adrenal glands, which in turn help regulate your mood," she adds. It's hard to feel great about sex if you don't feel, well, great, so fill up on some greens.

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Strawberries

It's not just that these sweet, juicy fruits look and feel sexy (heck, they wear their fertility—their seeds—on the outside!). The health benefits that they pack give weight to their aphrodisiacal reputation. Aside from a ridiculously high amount of vitamin C, folic acid and fiber, strawberries are a good source of potassium, which helps you avoid fluid retention (goodbye mood-killing bloat). "They even contain omega-3 fatty acids, highly valued for their contribution to a healthy cardiovascular system," says deVillers. And that's essential for sexual arousal and responsiveness. Dip `em in dark chocolate (click to the next slide to see why), and you have a double whammy!

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Dark Chocolate

Put aside for a moment how good it tastes and feels as it melts in your mouth—which is enough proof for most chocolate lovers that chocolate is for lovers. Dark chocolate contains a compound called phenylethylamine, an endorphin released in the brain when you're feeling the warm fuzzies of falling in love. Share a few squares of high-quality dark chocolate before bed, and hopping in the sack will feel all the more delicious.

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Nuts

Many varieties, including walnuts, hazelnuts, almonds, pine nuts, Brazil nuts and peanuts, contain the essential amino acid L-arginine, which helps the brain do its job circulating neurotransmitters, brain chemicals that send messages to cells (like, "gee, this feels *so good*—more please!"). "And the fatty acids in nuts increase

endorphins, making you feel more relaxed," says Balleck. L-arginine also has been shown to dilate blood vessels, improving blood flow to the genitals, which in turn may enhance arousal and intensify orgasms.

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Blueberries

Circulation is a big deal for both libido and sexual function—without good blood flow, arousal takes longer (it's the blood rushing to your sexy bits that primes you for orgasm)—and blueberries are great for improving circulation. “Their high levels of antioxidants, which destroy cell-damaging free radicals, also make you look sexier,” says

Balleck. What's more: Blueberries contain dopamine, a neurotransmitter whose job is to stimulate your brain's pleasure centers (the ones that make you say, “Ooh!”).

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Watermelon

True, cool and juicy slabs of watermelon are a staple at G-rated family picnics, but this super-sweet fruit is also a sex-booster. First, bright-red watermelon contains an amino acid called l-citrulline, which helps relax and dilate blood vessels, naturally increasing blood flow to sexual organs and contributing to a hotter climax. Plus, watermelon's mostly, you know, water—making it an anti-bloat machine. Incorporating a pit-spitting contest into sex play: Optional.

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A Carb-and-Protein Balanced Meal

It's not just about single food items. A combination can either make you feel sexy or leave you too sluggish or full to do the deed. Jennifer Hanes, DO, author of *Lady in Weighting* and the forthcoming *The Princess Plan*, explains that a woman's libido is stimulated when the neurotransmitter serotonin is released in her brain. "Your serotonin level increases when you consume carbohydrates, but a carb binge can result in a massive sugar crash an hour or so later," which leaves you too pooped to

party. So skip the bottomless bowl of fettucine alfredo, and go for a meal that combines complex carbohydrates (like whole-grain pasta, brown rice, veggies and legumes, and not simple carbs like white pasta, white rice and white bread, which turn right to sugar) with protein. That'll give you a lasting serotonin boost and stable blood sugar energy. Think steak fajitas with black beans or smoked chicken with baked beans. Then again, maybe the beans would lead to mood-killing, uh, aftershocks.

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