



Nutrition News - March 2022

Celebrate A World Of Flavors With Lemons

You know the old saying "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade" - but there's a lot more you can make with lemons. Start by adding it many other savory and sweet dishes.

Lemons are a versatile fruit. They haven't gained popularity the way similar fruit like oranges have, since lemons have a reputation for sourness. But you'll be amazed of the health benefits lemons can offer. Like all whole plant-based foods, lemons' health benefits derive from a complex synergy of various phytonutrients, other vitamins, minerals, and even trace amounts of healthy fatty acids.

Did you know?

- The acidity of lemon juice and zest sharpens the other flavors in a dish.
- Lemon juice can help substitute for animal-based ingredients like eggs and buttermilk and contribute to leavening.
- Lemon juice can help red foods (including red cabbage, red grapes, plums, cherries, cranberries, strawberries, and raspberries) retain their color and not turn purple or blue.
- Lemon juice can also inhibit the browning caused by oxidation in cut fruits like apples, pears, bananas, peaches, and avocados.
- Lemons are anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial, and they offer protection against cancer and parasites.
- Lemons are high in antioxidants, most notably vitamin C (your average lemon contains almost 31 milligrams), which can strengthen immunity and aid in absorption of iron.

Using Lemon Juice in Recipes

- When cooking with lemon juice, wait until the dish has almost finished cooking before adding it. This preserves the lemon's water-soluble vitamins, such as the famous vitamin C.
- You can also squeeze fresh lemon juice over just about any dish. It goes well in most sauces, including pesto, tomato sauce, plant-based tzatziki, salad dressings, and more.
- You can substitute lemon juice for vinegar in sauces
- Lemon juice adds flavor and enhances color and textures in soups, stews, and chilis
- Add lemon juice to beverages from classic lemonade to ice teas, mocktails to smoothies
- Sprinkle zest over salads, use it in salad dressings and other sauces, and garnish curries, soups, stews, and chilis.
- Punch up the lemon-ness of baked goods (zest is awesome in lemon muffins, for example), sprinkle it over grain or oatmeal bowls, and use it as a tasty and colorful topping for plant-based yogurts.

Using Lemons Around The Home

- Cleaning cutting boards. If washing the cutting board isn't removing the odors accumulated through use, try rubbing half a lemon on the cutting board before your next wash.
- Deter insects. Many insects are sensitive to smell and won't go near areas sprayed with lemon juice. Mix with white vinegar for greater effectiveness.
- Stain removal. Lemon juice mixed with salt can help remove stains from red wine, mildew, grease or berries. Add a touch of baking soda to the mix, too.

Check the back page for a tasty and healthy recipe incorporating lemons!

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Easy Recipe: Creamy Avocado Pasta with Asparagus and Tomato

The Pasta

8 oz organic or legume pasta, or spiralized zucchini noodles

The Sauce

1 medium avocado, halved, seeded and peeled
 ½ cup plant-based milk (plain, unsweetened, add ¼ cup as needed)
 2 tbsp lemon juice (freshly squeezed)
 ¼ tsp garlic powder
 ¼ tsp salt (optional)
 ¼ tsp ground black pepper (optional)
 2 cups organic grape or cherry tomatoes (halved)
 2 cups asparagus, cut into 1" pieces
 6 medium garlic cloves, thinly sliced
 1 tsp dried oregano
 ¼ tsp salt (optional)
 1 ½ cups arugula, chopped
 ¼ cup basil, chopped
 ¼ cup green onion, sliced
 crushed red pepper (optional) to taste
 2 tbsp nutritional yeast (optional) and 2 lemon wedges

Directions

1. Cook pasta according to directions, drain and set aside.
2. Make the avocado sauce: Add the avocado, ½ cup plant-based milk, lemon juice, garlic powder and salt (if using) to a blender or food processor. Blend until smooth.
3. Taste for additional flavors and add more plant-based milk if needed for a thinner consistency. You'll want it similar to a smoothie consistency. Set aside.
4. Cook the asparagus and tomatoes: Heat a large stovetop pot (not a pan) over medium-high. Add the tomatoes and asparagus, stirring frequently and adding 1–2 tablespoons of water as needed. Cook for 1–2 minutes or until the tomatoes are tender.
Stir in the garlic and cook for another minute.
5. Stir in the oregano and salt, if using.
6. Transfer the pasta and avocado sauce to the pot with tomatoes and asparagus.
7. Cook on medium for 1–2 minutes until warmed through.
8. Stir in the arugula, basil and green onion.
9. Remove from heat and divide between two bowls. Top with crushed red pepper and nutritional yeast, if desired.
Serve with lemon wedges.
Serves 2.

March 25, 2022

Bowdoin Park



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