

Health Benefits of Almonds



Almonds are referred to as nuts, but in fact, they are seeds of the fruit of the almond tree. As they ripen, the hull of the almond seed cracks open, exposing the shell so the kernel can dry. Like other seeds, almonds are rich in vitamins, minerals and protective compounds. They are an excellent source of healthy unsaturated fats that can help lower cholesterol and reduce risk of heart disease.

Although high in calories, almond consumption has been shown to lower risk of obesity. One ounce, about 1/4 cup or 24 almonds, is a serving.



WHAT MAKES ALMONDS GREAT?

Nutrition

One ounce raw almonds provides 165 Calories, 6 gm protein, 3 gm fiber, 14 gm fat and no cholesterol.

Antioxidants

Almonds contain 50% of the RDA for vitamin E in a 1-ounce serving. Vitamin E acts as an antioxidant that fights free radicals and reduces inflammation that can lead to disease. It is involved with immune function, gene expression and lowers blood pressure by improving artery function.

Vitamins

Almonds are an excellent source of riboflavin (B2) which plays a major role in energy production, growth and development, and the metabolism of fats and drugs. Since it can lower homocysteine, it reduces risk for heart disease.

Minerals

Magnesium in almonds is involved in nerve communication and messaging, immune function and muscle contraction, including the heart muscle.

Manganese is another antioxidant important in neutralizing free radicals and boosting immune response. It aids in bone formation, metabolism and works with vitamin K to assist in blood clotting.

Almonds are a rich source of calcium. Although 99% of calcium is stored in the bones and teeth, the remaining

1% plays an important role in blood vessel health, blood clotting, muscle function, nerve transmission and hormone secretion. It also helps to maintain proper pH of the blood.

Fiber

Almonds contain both soluble and insoluble fiber which aid in digestion. Fiber feeds your healthy microbiome and helps you feel full, which can help with weight management.

Fat

Although high in fat, most is healthy unsaturated fat, with 80% monounsaturated and 15% polyunsaturated. Unsaturated fats lower cholesterol levels associated with increased risk of vascular disease. Omega 3 fats in almonds and other nuts help reduce inflammation. Like all other plant foods, almonds contain no cholesterol.

BUYING AND USING ALMONDS

California grows 80% of the world's almond supply. They can be found year-round in grocery stores and are available in a variety of forms including whole, sliced, slivered and chopped. They can be purchased raw, roasted, salted, or coated in other spices.

Almonds are light brown on the outside and white on the inside. The high oil content can oxidize, spoiling the flavor. If you slice the almond and see a yellowish color or a honeycomb pattern, the almond is spoiled or rancid.

Storing almonds properly can prevent almonds from going rancid. Raw almonds can last up to 2 years if stored in an



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airtight container. Shelf-life is extended if stored in the refrigerator or freezer. Roasted almonds will last up to 1 year in an airtight container in the refrigerator or freezer.

Try making almond milk at home. Soak 1 cup raw almonds in water overnight in the fridge. Drain and add to blender with 5 cups water and a pinch of salt. Blend 2 minutes. Drain through nut bag or cheesecloth and squeeze out all liquid. Retain fiber for use in muffins or pancakes. Store almond milk in the fridge 4-5 days.

Honey Sesame Almonds

acouplecooks.com

Ingredients:

2 Tbsp honey 1/4 tsp kosher salt
1/4 cup sesame seeds 1/2 tsp cayenne pepper
2 cups roasted, unsalted almonds

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F and line baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Microwave honey for 15 seconds, then mix with other ingredients.
3. Place coated nuts on baking sheet and roast 10 minutes. Allow to cool, then break apart.
4. Store in airtight container.

Homemade Almond Butter

cookieandkate.com

Ingredients:

3 cups (16 oz) raw almonds 1/2 tsp vanilla
1/4 tsp salt 2 Tbsp maple syrup or
1/4 tsp cinnamon honey (optional)

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Put almonds on baking sheet and toast 10 minutes, stirring halfway.
2. Let almonds cool about 10 minutes.
3. Transfer almonds to a blender or food processor and blend until creamy. Be patient since it will form clumps, then a ball. Keep mixing until it is creamy.
4. Once smooth, blend in spices or flavorings (cinnamon, honey, maple syrup, vanilla)
5. Let it cool then transfer to a jar and store in refrigerator.

REFERENCES

Almonds.com
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ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets
Minimalistbaker.com/how-to-make-almond-milk

1-Pan Garlicky Green Beans with Slivered Almonds

Minimalistbaker.com

Green Beans Ingredients:

1 pound green beans, stems and ends trimmed
1 Tbsp avocado oil (canola oil OK)
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 Tbsp dairy free margarine
Sea salt and pepper to taste

Almonds Ingredients:

1/3 cup slivered or sliced raw almonds
1 pinch sea salt

Directions:

1. Heat large skillet over medium heat. Add almonds and salt to dry pan and toast for 4-5 minutes. Set aside.
2. Rinse and dry the green beans and remove any stems or rough ends with a knife or scissors.
3. Heat skillet over medium-high heat. Add the oil and wait 1 minute. Add the green beans. Season with salt and pepper (recommend starting with 1/2 tsp salt and 1/4 tsp pepper).
4. Cover and cook about 8 minutes, stirring occasionally. Keep the heat high and the cover tight so the green beans get browned but tender. Turn heat down slightly if they are close to burning.
5. Add the minced garlic and margarine. Toss to coat. Cook 1-2 more minutes, tossing frequently. Add almonds.
6. Serve immediately. Store leftovers covered up to 2-3 days in the refrigerator.