

9 SUPERFOODS

FROM INDIA, UGANDA,
KOREA & ITALY
YOUR GUT NEEDS
+ 5 EASY RECIPES



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At Zonia, we believe that empowering the individual is the best way to break the chains of chronic diseases and mental health issues. We've built an ecosystem, where world-class functional medicine doctors and health experts share their life-long experience with regular people, which has never been done before.

Our video-streaming platform features 150+ medical doctors and published authors, who are at the forefront of functional and environmental medicine. Our action-based, science-backed short videos, that we call health bites, cover a wide variety of topics - from nutritional and cooking instructional videos to meditation & mindfulness audios, and workout, yoga and pilates classes.

In addition, we offer a collection of award-winning short films (live action, animation and documentaries) from around the world that are sure to lift your spirit! Among them are several Oscar winners, and all of them are audience favorites.

Through the content we share, we equip Zonia members with real life stories of recovery, cutting-edge protocols to prevent diseases, and powerful docuseries about the biggest challenges of our modern lifestyle.

Our desire to empower people with fact-checked knowledge and simple tools that everyone can utilize drives us to always do more and reach more people. Our next big goal is to reach 1 billion people. That way, we can truly make an impact.

We welcome you to join our mission!



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The world is filled with some truly amazing, unique, and delicious foods!

No matter where you go, you'll find fascinating new cuisines using ingredients, spices, and herbs found nowhere else.

There is so much marvelous food to discover—and so much of it is amazing for your health.

That's right: a lot of these unique foods will provide the macro and micronutrients your body needs to function better.

In particular, these foods will nourish your gut, encouraging the growth of beneficial bacteria in your intestines that play such a critical role in your overall health.

Below, we've gathered a list of the most amazing superfoods from countries around the world, all of which will do wonders to boost your gut function and improve your overall health in so many ways.

Make sure to keep reading all the way to the end, because we've got some recipes that you can follow to make your own gut-friendly foods from around the world.

Let's jump right in!

Superfood #1:



Kimchi

Kimchi is a staple of Korean cuisine. The spicy fermented cabbage is so much more than just a wonderful side dish or accompaniment to main dishes; it's also incredibly good for your health!

To begin with, kimchi is made with cabbage, an amazing source of micronutrients. It's packed with dietary fiber, Vitamin C, Vitamin B6, Vitamin K, iron, niacin, folate, and riboflavin. Its nutritional content alone pre-fermentation already makes it an amazing health-boosting food.

But during the lacto-fermentation process, kimchi is turned into a probiotic, replete with live *Lactobacillus* bacteria.

Kimchi is known to be a powerful immune-booster, both in your gut (where 80% of your immune system activity takes place) and in your body overall. The *Lactobacillus* bacteria present in kimchi can have a



powerful immune-enhancing effect that shields you from disease and infection¹.

It's also a potent anti-inflammatory² that not only prevents low-grade inflammation in your body but also curbs the activity of pro-inflammatory enzymes and prevents the release of inflammatory compounds³.

By reducing this inflammation, kimchi may be effective at slowing down biological aging. Biological aging, as you know, is accelerated by chronic inflammation, but the anti-inflammatory properties of kimchi can extend the lifespan of cells and prevent cellular breakdown.

It's also a heart-smart, weight loss-inducing, absolutely delicious food that you can easily make at home.

(Read to the end for a quick and easy kimchi recipe!)



Turmeric

Turmeric, a staple of Indian cuisine, might be one of the most potent health-boosting spices on the planet!

Research into turmeric's numerous benefits is still in its early stages, but science has already uncovered a plethora of amazing things this tasty, brightly-colored spice can do.

According to Johns Hopkins Medicine⁴, turmeric can:

- **Reduce inflammation.** Turmeric is rich in the antioxidant curcumin, which is a powerful anti-inflammatory agent.
- **Protect the body from free radicals.** The high flavonoid and antioxidant content of turmeric makes it highly effective at preventing free radical damage and oxidative stress.



- **Prevent and treat inflammatory conditions**, including allergies, colitis, infections, arthritis, and joint disorders.
- **Treat health problems**, including metabolic syndrome, anxiety, hyperlipidemia and high cholesterol, post-workout muscle soreness, and even kidney disorders.

When it comes to your gut health, turmeric can specifically combat the inflammation in your intestinal tract that could lead to poor digestion, or even the formation of cancer cells. Research⁵ has proven that turmeric can treat IBD, IBS, functional dyspepsia, acid reflux, flatulence, ulcerative colitis, and a host of other gut disorders.

Adding turmeric into your dishes adds both rich flavor and a bright, eye-catching color. However, if you want an easy way to obtain all the benefits of turmeric with as little prep time as possible, turmeric tea is an excellent option.

Keep reading all the way to the end for our favorite Turmeric Tea recipe.



Ginger

Ginger comes from the same root family as turmeric, so it should be no surprise that it offers an equally impressive number of benefits. It's also added into a wide range of tasty Indian dishes.

Research has linked ginger to all sorts of amazing health benefits, including:

- **Fighting nausea**, thanks to the antioxidant gingerol, which can help to settle an upset stomach⁶. In fact, it's so effective at combating nausea it's often utilized to reduce the nausea caused by chemotherapy and morning sickness accompanying pregnancy.
- **Increasing antioxidant activity in your body**⁷. Both gingerol and zingerone are powerful antioxidants that can reduce oxidative stress and protect against free radical damage.



- **Reducing inflammation**, thanks to ginger's natural anti-inflammatory properties.
- **Improve your gut health** by managing chronic indigestion⁸ and fighting the bacteria that are responsible for a number of intestinal infections. Ginger also increases gastrointestinal motility⁹, helping your stomach push food through the digestive system more efficiently. This not only leads to more effective digestion, but also reduced stomach upset (hence, its nausea-fighting abilities).

Drink it in a tea, take it in supplement form, or chop it up and add it into your meals—however you consume ginger, it's one of the healthiest, most gut-friendly foods!

Superfood #4:



Lentils

Lentils, aka dal, is one of the most popular foods in the heavily vegetarian Indian diet.

There are literally hundreds of dal recipes popular in India, and each region and city has its own unique take on the dish. Lentils are so widespread because they're inexpensive and an amazing source of nutrients that are incredibly beneficial for your health.

A single serving of lentils contains 12 grams of protein, 23 grams of carbohydrates, and 9 grams of fiber. When consumed with whole grains (such as quinoa, brown rice, or sorghum), they provide all the amino acids your body needs to build new muscle tissue.

But it's the fiber that makes lentils such a gut-friendly choice.

Lentils have a very specific type of fiber that acts as a prebiotic to feed



the beneficial bacteria in your intestines. The fiber doesn't get broken down in the stomach, but passes through to your intestines, where it's absorbed and broken down by your gut bacteria. That fiber sustains and strengthens the bacteria and encourages it to grow. As a result, your gut bacteria flourishes and grows more active in its defense of your body.

Fiber is absolutely critical for both your gut health and your immune system¹⁰. Thanks to their high fiber content, lentils will help regulate your bowels, reduce the risk of colorectal cancer, and encourage better gut function overall.

Stay tuned, because at the end, we're going to share one of the tastiest dal recipes we've ever prepared!



Hawaijar

Hawaijar is the name of an Indian dish made from fermented soybeans. It's similar in nature to the natto popular in Japan, but unique to the Indian state of Manipur.

Like all fermented foods, it's an amazing source of probiotics (live bacteria cultures) that support the beneficial bacteria living in your gut. It's particularly rich in bacillus bacteria¹¹, which is the same strain of bacteria that makes up a significant percentage of our gut flora.

Hawaijar is also loaded with dietary fiber, which acts as a prebiotic to feed and sustain your gut bacteria. On top of that, it's an amazing source of vegan protein (43 grams per 100 grams of fermented soybeans) while being fairly low in fat and rich in complex carbohydrates.



Sweet Potatoes

Sweet potatoes are a staple of Ugandan cuisine, and with good reason! They're one of the most nutritionally rich and complex of the root vegetables.

Sweet potatoes are packed with macronutrients (4 grams of protein and 41 grams of carbohydrates), but where they really shine is in their micronutrient content, including manganese, copper, niacin, potassium, copper, Vitamin B6, and Vitamin C.

Their primary benefit lies in their high Vitamin A content. One 200-gram serving contains more than 200% of the Vitamin A your body needs every day. Vitamin A is a powerful antioxidant that protects the cells in your eyes from degeneration and maintains a healthy vision^{[12](#)}.

Sweet potatoes are also amazingly rich in soluble and insoluble



fiber, which nurtures your gut. Soluble fiber absorbs water and aids in digestion, softening your stool so your body can eliminate waste more efficiently. However, insoluble fiber is the food your gut bacteria need to grow and flourish. A diet high in insoluble fiber is gut-friendly, leading to increased immunity and activity in your gut.

Research¹³ has linked sweet potatoes (particularly the purple variety) to improved gut health, reduced IBS, decreased inflammation, and lower overall risk of gut disorders.

Superfood #7:



Cassava

Cassava, another staple of Ugandan cuisine, shares a lot in common with sweet potatoes. They're both root vegetables, rich in starch and digestive fiber, and both are excellent for your gut health.

The resistant starch, in particular, is critical for improving your digestive system. This particular type of starch isn't broken down in the stomach, but survives digestion and enters the intestines, where it serves as food for your gut bacteria. On top of that, it can also aid in waste elimination and reduce inflammation^{[14](#)}.

The resistant starch is also highly effective at managing blood sugar levels and combating both Type 2 Diabetes and obesity. Research has proven^{[15](#)} that it can increase feelings of satiety following a meal, helping you to eat less.

Cassava root isn't the easiest to prepare, but we've got a recipe below that will help you make it into a truly tasty dish.

Superfood #8:



Fava Beans

Fava beans aren't the most common ingredient used in Italian cuisine, but when it's added into dishes, it always improves both the taste and nutritional content.

Like lentils, fava beans are rich in plant-based proteins, micronutrients, and fiber. They're also an excellent source of soluble and insoluble fiber that both improve digestion and reduce inflammation in your intestines.

Research has also linked them to a wide range of other benefits, including:

- Lower cholesterol^{[16](#)}
- Lower blood pressure^{[17](#)}
- Faster weight loss^{[18](#)}



- Reduced anemia risk^{[19](#)}, thanks to their high protein content
- Stronger bones^{[20](#)}, thanks to their high copper and manganese content
- A stronger immune system^{[21](#)}
- Decreased symptoms of Parkinson's disease^{[22](#)}

Any Italian dish that calls for fava beans to be added is absolutely worth trying given the many health benefits of this amazing legume.

Superfood #9:



Kohlrabi

Kohlrabi is a unique staple of Italian cuisine, specifically Sicily and southern Italy. Sicilians call the veggie cavoli, while Italians call it cavolo rapa.

Kohlrabi comes in both light green and purple variations, and like all cruciferous veggies (including broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage), it's an amazing source of dietary fiber and other micronutrients—from Vitamin C to folate to Vitamin B6 to potassium.

The dietary fiber in kohlrabi is amazing for not only improving digestion, but also acting as a prebiotic to feed the bacteria in your gut. The fiber produces short-chain fatty acids²³ that nourish the gut bacteria and increase both its activity and proliferation.

Research has also linked kohlrabi to a reduced risk of obesity and heart disease²⁴, as well as increased immune activity and greater protection against infections.



Keep reading to the next section, where we'll share with you one of our favorite kohlrabi recipes.

All of these foods are truly amazing for your gut health—and the health of your entire body—thanks to their micronutrient and antioxidant content.

If you want to see noticeable improvements in your digestion, immune system, and gut bacteria, why not try adding them into your diet today?

Don't worry if you're unfamiliar with the foods or ingredients; up next, we've put together five simple recipes to help you easily prepare these delicious superfoods.

5 Easy Recipes to Make Your Own Gut-Friendly Superfoods

Recipe #1:



Kimchi

Make your own batch of this classic Korean side dish at home, and you'll always have a batch of kimchi in your fridge ready to eat!

Ingredients:

For this recipe, you will need:

- 1 head of napa cabbage
- 1 liter of water
- 5 ounces of Korean coarse salt (though natural rock salt will do)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of cooking salt
- Kimchi paste (either make your own or use store-bought)

Preparation:

Quarter the cabbage, then rinse it thoroughly under running water to make sure all the dirt is washed away.

Pour the coarse salt into a bowl filled with the water, and once dissolved, dip the napa cabbage into the salt water for



a minute or two before placing them on a tray. Sprinkle the cooking salt directly onto the stems, as well as into each leaf.

Place the cabbage into a food-grade plastic bag, pour in the salt water, and seal it up so it's airtight.

Set it aside for 6 hours to pickle, rotating the cabbage every 2 hours.

After 6 hours, rinse off the fermented cabbage with clean running water, and let them drain thoroughly in a colander for an hour.

Follow the instructions for your homemade or store-bought kimchi paste, mix it into the pickled cabbage leaves so it's fully covered, and place it in an airtight container to sit in the fridge overnight or for 24 hours before eating.

Recipe #2:



Turmeric Tea

All the health benefits of turmeric can be found in a tasty, easy-to-drink tea that includes highly immune-boosting, gut-friendly properties. Make this every morning for better digestive health!

Ingredients:

For this recipe, you will need:

- Turmeric (either fresh turmeric root, paste, or powder)
- 1 lemon
- Black pepper

Preparation:

If you're making the tea with fresh turmeric root, you'll need to boil the root for 10-15 minutes to extract the maximum flavor.

If you're using turmeric paste or powder, you can add a tablespoon or two into a kettle or pot of simmering water.



Once the turmeric tea base is made, add in a pinch of black pepper (the piperine makes the curcumin more easily digestible) and the juice of one lemon.

Drink hot or chill in the fridge overnight for a delicious iced tea.

Recipe #3:



Dal

Ingredients:

For this recipe, you will need:

- 1 cup of lentils
- 3 cups of water
- 2 cups of vegetable stock
- $\frac{1}{2}$ inch ginger root
- $\frac{1}{2}$ inch turmeric root
- 2 teaspoons of cumin seeds
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 2 whole dried red chilies
- Cilantro, chopped for a garnish

Give this dal recipe a try, and get ready to fall in love. It's rich, spicy, and packed with maximum flavor—everything you want in a tasty Indian-inspired dish.

Preparation:

Place the lentils into a pot with the water and bring to a boil. Once boiling, add in the vegetable stock and cook until the lentils soften and the liquid begins to reduce.

Pour the olive oil into a skillet



and add the chopped ginger root, turmeric root, garlic, and whole dried red chilies. Add in the cumin seeds and cook until fragrant, then pour in the lentils with a bit of the liquid. Cook for another 10-15 minutes to seal in the flavors, then serve into a bowl with a bit of chopped cilantro for a garnish.

Recipe #4:



Cassava Veggie Soup

Ingredients:

For this recipe, you will need:

- 2 cassava
- 4 cups of low-sodium vegetable stock
- 2 celery stalks
- 1 onion
- 2 carrots
- 3 cloves of garlic
- Salt and pepper, as desired
- Red chili flakes, as desired

This recipe delivers a simple yet hearty soup you can eat when the weather turns cold, and is packed with flavor and immune-boosting, gut-friendly ingredients you'll absolutely love.

Preparation:

Dice the cassava and add it into a pot with boiling water. Cook until just beginning to soften, usually around 15 minutes.

Drain the cassava and set it aside.



In another stock pot, cook the chopped onion, celery, carrots, and garlic in a tablespoon of olive oil. Once fragrant, pour in the vegetable stock and bring to a boil. Turn the heat down to medium-low and add in the cassava chunks to simmer for an additional 10-15 minutes. Add salt and black pepper as desired.

Once you serve it, sprinkle red chili flakes on the top for extra flavor.

Recipe #5:



Roasted Kohlrabi

Ingredients:

For this recipe, you will need:

- 5 or 6 kohlrabi
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- Kosher salt
- Black pepper
- Cayenne pepper
- Chopped parsley, to garnish
- Nutritional yeast flakes (optional)

This recipe transforms a complex vegetable into something incredibly delicious and simple to prepare. You'll be happy to serve this at any dinner, party, or gathering, and it'll definitely be a crowd pleaser.

Preparation:

Peel the kohlrabi and cut them into wedges, roughly 1 inch in

diameter.

Place the wedges in a bowl and toss them with the olive oil, kosher salt,



and black pepper to taste.

Spread them out onto a baking sheet covered with tin foil, add a pinch of cayenne pepper across the tops, and put into an oven heated to 450 degrees.

Roast the kohlrabi for up to 30 minutes or until golden. Stir every 10 minutes to cook evenly.

Serve onto a plate with a sprinkling of chopped parsley for a garnish and a bit of nutritional yeast flakes for a cheesy flavor.

Resources



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