

Are they actually good for me?

Buzz foods

You've heard the names, but what exactly are they? Our experts examine the health benefits of the latest superfoods to hit the shelves



Catherine Saxelby
Nutritionist



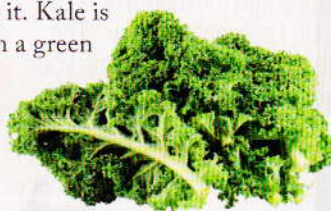
Zoe Wilson
Dietitian

➤ Kale

What's the buzz? "Kale is a leafy green veggie and part of the cruciferous family along with cauliflower, broccoli and cabbage," says dietitian Zoe Wilson.

Why is it good? "It's high in fibre, low in kilojoules and packed with vitamins A, C and K, calcium and chemicals called flavonoids, which are antioxidants and anti-inflammatories. Kale may reduce the risk of certain cancers."

How do I eat it? "Some of the health benefits will be destroyed by boiling, so try steaming, microwaving or stir-frying it. Kale is fantastic in a green smoothie, with fruit, yoghurt, milk and honey."



➤ Spirulina

What's the buzz? "Spirulina is a dried blue-green algae extract," says Zoe. "It has an impressive nutrient content when compared gram-to-gram with other foods."

Why is it good? "Spirulina is higher in protein than any other plant. It's also rich in potassium and contains vitamins, calcium, iron, magnesium and zinc. Research has suggested it may be beneficial to brain and heart health and help boost the immune system."

How do I eat it? You can get spirulina in powder or tablet form and you only need 2-3g daily. "Mix the powder into freshly squeezed juice, water or salad dressings,"



says Zoe. "Avoid taking it within 30 minutes of caffeine as this may interfere with the absorption of nutrients."

➤ Acai berry

What's the buzz? This bitter purple fruit (pronounced "ah-sigh-ee") grows on the acai palm in the Amazon region.

Why is it good? Acai berries are full of antioxidants. "Acai is rich in fibre and vitamin E and contains calcium, iron and a high proportion of fatty acids," adds nutritionist Catherine Saxelby.

How do I eat it? Acai usually comes powdered, juiced or in a supplement or bar. To make an acai bowl: blend a frozen acai smoothie pack (available at health food stores) with almond or soy milk and a frozen banana. Top with granola or blueberries.



➤ Goji berry

What's the buzz? Goji berries are a tart fruit grown in the Himalayas. "They belong to the same family as tomato and capsicum," says Catherine.

Why is it good? Goji berries are a source of antioxidants, betacarotene and lutein (good for eye health), vitamin C, calcium and water-soluble polysaccharides, which support immunity and brain health.

How do I eat it? Toss dried goji berries into homemade muesli, mix into muffins or sprinkle over salads.



➤ Chia seed

What's the buzz? Chia seeds are taken from the chia plant grown naturally in South America, and now in WA.

Why is it good? Chia seeds are high in omega-3 (for heart and brain health) and fibre, and contain protein, calcium and a variety of other vitamins and minerals.

How do I eat it?

"Sprinkle over cereal or use to coat rissoles – they add a pleasant crunch," says Catherine. "Mix 1-2 tablespoons into a cup of water and add the gel to smoothies, juices, yoghurts and soups."



➤ Quinoa

What's the buzz? This South American grain (pronounced "keen-wah") dates back thousands of years and was a staple for the Inca civilisation.

Why is it good? "Quinoa has double the protein of most grains and about three times the fibre of brown rice," Catherine says. "It's rich in iron, low GI and an excellent source of potassium and zinc."

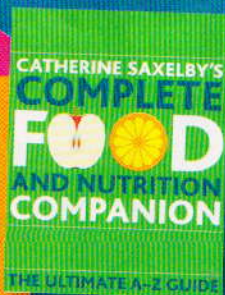
How do I eat it? "Boil in water or stock for an alternative to white rice. I love a quinoa salad with red onion, baby spinach, lentils, pomegranate, walnuts and mushrooms."



Nutrition

Top read

Catherine Saxelby's *Complete Food And Nutrition Companion: The Ultimate A-Z Guide* (Hardie Grant, RRP \$45)



PERFECT BLEND
Amp up your vitamin intake by adding superfoods to your daily routine

Bush tucker superfoods

This indigenous bush tucker can also give your health a boost



Samantha Martin
Bush tucker expert

Superfoods aren't just grown in rainforests thousands of kilometres away – check out these locally grown beauties.

Billygoat plums

These are full of antioxidants and have one of the highest concentrations of vitamin C of any fruit in the world. "Health food companies are beginning to capitalise on the natural benefits by processing it into capsules and powder form," says Samantha Martin, author of *Bush Tukka Guide* (Hardie Grant, RRP \$19.95, out in April).



Lilly pillly

The red and pink berries of the plant contain antioxidants and vitamin C to boost the immune system. "They are a perfect addition to a smoothie or fruit salad," says Samantha. "They're also fantastic in jams, ice-creams, savoury and sweet sauces, and baked into muffins."



Lemon myrtle

The leaves have the world's highest concentration of citral – an oil that has a natural anti-viral action. They're also rich in lutein, folate, vitamins A and E, zinc, magnesium and calcium. "The fragrant leaves add a refreshing lemon flavour to sweet and savoury dishes," says Samantha. "They can also be boiled and drunk as a tea, which can be used as an anti-inflammatory to treat swollen joints."



Cacao

What's the buzz? Cacao is made by cold-pressing unroasted cocoa beans. It's the raw form of chocolate.

Why is it good? "Cacao contains high levels of flavonoids, which may have beneficial cardiovascular effects, and is relatively low in fat compared with chocolate," says Catherine. "Cacao is also high in antioxidants, minerals and tryptophan, which leads to the production of serotonin – a chemical that produces the feeling of happiness."

How do I eat it? Cacao powder can be added to bliss balls, smoothies and desserts.

Or try cacao nibs in yoghurt, muesli and salads.

