

10 Reasons to Eat More Olives

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Olives are a fruit that dates back some 8,000 years. Even though olives have gotten a bad rap for being high in fat, it is actually the healthy monounsaturated variety that has been found to reduce the risk of atherosclerosis and increase HDL (good) cholesterol.

1. **Cardiovascular Benefits:** When free radicals oxidize cholesterol, blood vessels are damaged and fat builds up in the arteries, possibly leading to a heart attack. The anti-oxidant nutrients in black olives impede this oxidation of cholesterol, thereby helping to prevent heart disease. Recent studies have also shown that the monounsaturated fat found in olives can help to decrease blood pressure.
2. **Weight loss:** The monounsaturated fats in olives have been shown to breakdown fats inside of fat cells, getting rid of belly fat and reducing insulin insensitivity.
3. **Cancer Prevention:** The antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties of olives make them a natural protectant against cancer because chronic oxidative stress and chronic inflammation can be key factors in the development of cancer. If our cells get overwhelmed by oxidative stress (damage to cell structure and cell function by overly reactive oxygen-containing molecules) and chronic excessive inflammation, our risk of cell cancer is increased. By providing us with rich supplies of antioxidant and anti-inflammatory nutrients, olives can help us avoid this dangerous combination of chronic oxidative stress and chronic inflammation. Additionally, black olives are a great source of Vitamin E, which has the ability to neutralize free radicals in body fat.
4. **Less Pain:** Kalamata olives contain oleocanthal, an anti-inflammatory substance similar to ibuprofen.
5. **Skin and Hair Health:** Black olives are rich in fatty acids, antioxidants, and Vitamin E that nourish, hydrate, and protect the skin. Vitamin E is a powerful lipid soluble antioxidant required for maintaining the integrity of cell membranes of the mucosa and skin by protecting it from harmful oxygen-free radicals and ultraviolet radiation.



6. **Less Allergies:** Olive extracts have been shown to function as anti-histamines at a cellular level by blocking special histamine receptors.
7. **Digestive Tract Health:** Frequent consumption of Vitamin E and the monounsaturated fats in black olives has been associated with lower rates of colon cancer. These nutrients have been shown to help prevent colon cancer by neutralizing free radicals.
8. **Good Source of Iron:** Olives, especially black olives, are very high in iron. Iron is essential in transporting oxygen throughout the body, plays a vital role in the production of energy, and helps the immune system function properly.
9. **Eye Health:** One cup of olives contains 10% of the daily allowance of Vitamin A, which is crucial for healthy eyes. Vitamin A enables the eye to better distinguish between light and dark and effective against cataracts, macular degeneration, glaucoma, and other age related ocular diseases.
10. **Increased Blood Levels of Glutathione:** Olives have shown the ability to increase blood levels of glutathione—one of the body's premier antioxidant nutrient.

Marinated Olives Recipe

Total time prep: 10 min. + marinating

Makes: 16 Servings

Nutritional Facts: 1/4 cup: 98 calories, 10g fat (1g saturated fat), 0 cholesterol, 572 mg sodium, 3g carbohydrates (0 sugars, 0 fiber), 0 protein.

2 cups large pimento-stuffed olives, drained

1 cup pitted Kalamata olives, drained

1 cup pitted medium ripe olives drained

1/4 cup olive oil

2 Tablespoons lemon juice

1 Tablespoon minced fresh thyme or 1 teaspoon dried thyme

2 teaspoons minced fresh rosemary or 1/2 teaspoon dried rosemary, crushed

2 teaspoons grated lemon peel

4 garlic cloves, slivered

Pepper to taste

Place olives in a bowl. Combine the remaining ingredients; pour over olives and stir.

Cover and refrigerate for 1-2 days before serving, stirring several times each day. Olives may be refrigerated for 2 weeks. Serve with a slotted spoon.