

How to make a powerhouse smoothie

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(HealthDay)—Smoothies make for a fast and filling breakfast or snack, but the bloom is off the rose when it comes to their health profile. Turns out that many store-bought smoothies are hidden havens for a crazy

amount of calories, many coming not only from the natural sugar in the fruit but also from added sweeteners.

Fortunately, you can take control of what goes into your smoothie when you make it at home and even amp up its nutrients.

Most smoothies overdo the fruit. One way to cut back but still get fruity flavor is by using fruit that is less sweet, like berries, for example. They're also among the fruits highest in antioxidants and other micronutrients. Blueberries are particularly beneficial for your brain, blood sugar control and eye health. Fresh or frozen, they are equally nutritious. Blueberries also pair well with greens, and that's where you can really ramp up a smoothie's nutrition. By adding [spinach](#), for instance, you'll get vitamins A and C, fiber and iron.

A key smoothie ingredient is Greek yogurt, which adds protein along with creaminess. Yogurt also contains helpful probiotic bacteria that balance the flora in your gut. Another superfood addition is chia seeds. They're high in fiber, protein and good-quality fat, all of which will help you to feel full longer and give you energy throughout your morning. Just be sure to measure them carefully since they are calorie-dense. Nuts are another great nutrition-booster. Walnuts are particularly rich in [omega-3 fatty acids](#).

For even more flavor, consider sprinkling some high-quality spices into your [smoothies](#). Turmeric, cardamom or cinnamon are all antioxidant-rich.

Blueberry-Spinach Smoothie

- 1 cup frozen or fresh blueberries
- 1 cup baby spinach leaves, packed

- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 2 tablespoons [chia seeds](#)
- 2 tablespoons chopped walnuts or almonds
- 1/4 teaspoon Ceylon cinnamon
- 8 ice cubes
- 1/4 cup [cold water](#)

Place all the ingredients in a blender and process on high until smooth. Pour into two glasses or to-go containers.

Yield: 2 servings

More information: The American Heart Association has another [green smoothie](#) recipe with a tropical note.

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