

5 Foundational Foods for Women

(and how to make them
part of your daily routine)

Hi!

I'M KAYLI.

I'm guessing you are here because you'd like to improve your health, but you also feel a little confused, overwhelmed, or stressed out when it comes to food. My goal is to help you take a big, long exhale (Haaaaaaa....) and release all the stress and struggle you're carrying about food and, like most women, your body too. And after we shake off all that mental and emotional tension, I'd like to help guide you back to a place of peace, ease, and confidence around food, nutrition, and body image. Doesn't that sound nice? I think so.

I know this journey well because I have walked it myself, and I have guided many women just like you to rediscover their ability to trust their intuition when it comes to food. I am so glad you're here.

Let's get started!



READ THIS FIRST!

These five foundational foods are grounded in science and embody a way of eating that helps women meet their unique nutrition needs. It is not a diet. Let me repeat that. It is not a diet. Although I recommend that you move toward making these foods part of your daily routine, know that there is plenty of wiggle room. In other words, some days these foods will not make it onto your plate and that is okay. Give yourself grace, flexibility, and space to have days where takeout happens for every meal or popcorn is what's for dinner. Your #1 goal is to practice compassion with yourself. Everything else comes second.

Now that you have called in your self-compassion, let the nutrition information on these pages empower you to nourish yourself from a place of self-care instead of self-control. You deserve it.

**With love + gratitude,
Kayli**

No. 1: Nuts & Seeds

Nuts and seeds are wonderful sources of healthy fats, and women need healthy fats! Fats are necessary to absorb the fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E, K) and are beneficial for hair, skin, and nails. Women who eat nuts daily are less likely to develop heart disease. Restricting foods like nuts and seeds that are rich in fat is a dangerous game for women. It makes it harder to meet your essential nutrient and energy needs which can lead to hormonal imbalances and irregular periods. The World Health Organization recommends that premenopausal women eat at least 20% of their calories from fat every day. So, make sure you are enjoying a daily dose of nuts and seeds.

Some nuts and seeds contain the essential fats (the fats we must get from our food on a regular basis) omega-3 and omega-6. Omega-3s are particularly important to eat daily. They support your brain and eye health, healthy pregnancy, and are associated with lower risk of cardiovascular disease, menstrual cramps, endometriosis, and other chronic diseases.



FOODS THAT SHINE:

Best omega-3 options:

- ▲ Walnuts
- ▲ Chia seeds
- ▲ Flaxseed
- ▲ Hemp seeds


Other gems:

- ▲ Pumpkin seeds
- ▲ Cashews
- ▲ Pecans
- ▲ Almonds
- ▲ Macadamia nuts
- ▲ Brazil nuts
- ▲ Sunflower seeds

YOUR DAILY PRACTICE:

Add 2 tablespoons of ground flaxseeds or chia seeds, or 3 tablespoons of hemp seeds, or ¼ cup of walnuts to your morning cereal, oatmeal, or smoothie.

You can also sprinkle on toast or a salad, bake into pancakes, or enjoy those walnuts on their own!



No. 2: Whole grains

Grains can feel scary because they are synonymous with the 5-letter word “carbs.” But whole grains are your friends. They are your body’s #1 source of energy. In fact, glucose (carbohydrates broken down in the bloodstream) is the only energy source your brain can use. This is why people feel lethargic, irritable, and unfocused when they restrict carbohydrate-rich foods (maybe you have experienced this). **Whole grains, which are the shining stars of carbohydrate-rich foods, are excellent sources of fiber, B vitamins, iron, zinc, and magnesium.**

Whole grains are known as complex carbohydrate sources, meaning they are closer to their “whole” form with all of their fiber and other nutritional benefits present and release into the bloodstream more slowly which keeps our energy levels feeling steady.

There are also simple carbohydrates. These are foods that have been refined and separated from their fiber and other nutrients. These sources are not rich in fiber or other nutrients that support health, and they release into the bloodstream quickly which elevates your insulin and glucose levels and makes you feel wonky energetically. Elevated insulin and glucose levels can cause insulin resistance which is a precursor to type 2 diabetes and plays a role in the development of heart disease, infertility, and some cancers. Women whose diets are high in simple carbohydrates are also more likely to experience infertility.

So, for a feeling of steady energy and a source of more nutrition, aim to choose whole (complex) grains as often as possible. Complex, life-giving, and so worth it - just like you.

FOODS THAT SHINE:

- ▲ Oats
- ▲ Brown rice
- ▲ Wild rice
- ▲ Quinoa
- ▲ Farro
- ▲ Whole grain pastas, breads, tortillas

YOUR DAILY PRACTICE:

Make whole grains the foundation of at least one of your meals each day - oats for breakfast, a whole grain wrap for lunch, or a quinoa bowl for dinner.



No. 3: Beans & Lentils

Beans and lentils (which includes soy) are, in my opinion, the most underrated foods. They are staples at breakfast, lunch, and dinner in almost every traditional eating pattern, but they have somehow fallen off of the modern plate. It's time to invite them back!

Beans and lentils are wonderful sources of plant-based protein. Getting enough protein helps support your immune system, helps you maintain your lean muscle mass, and supports your bones. Meeting protein needs is important for all women, but it becomes especially critical during pregnancy when protein is used for fetal development and later in life when women are prone to muscle and bone loss.

Unlike animal protein, plant proteins come packaged with health-supporting fiber, water, and antioxidants. Replacing protein-rich animal foods with protein-rich plant foods has unique benefits for women. Making this swap can cut infertility risk in half. It can also lower your risk of heart disease, diabetes, dementia, breast cancer, and other cancers.

Beans and lentils are also rich sources of iron. Women who are menstruating need more than double the amount of iron as men, and needs increase even more during pregnancy. The type of iron found in plant-based foods (non-heme iron) is safer than the type found in animal foods (heme iron). The body can regulate non-heme iron but not heme iron, and too much heme iron is linked to heart disease and certain types of cancers. Plant-based iron is also associated with healthy ovulation and fertility.

FOODS THAT SHINE:

- ▲ Black beans
- ▲ Kidney beans
- ▲ Pinto beans
- ▲ Cannellini beans
- ▲ Chickpeas
- ▲ Lentils
(red, green, brown)
- ▲ Soy
(edamame, tofu, tempeh)

YOUR DAILY PRACTICE:

Include beans or lentils at at least one meal each day. A few helpful tips:

- ▲ If you are worried about gas, rinse cooked beans really well before adding to a dish
- ▲ Roasted chickpeas and roasted edamame make incredible snacks
- ▲ Hummus counts!
- ▲ If you're in a hurry, lentils cook in under 30 minutes

No. 4: Cruciferous Vegetables



Cruciferous vegetables include leafy greens like kale, broccoli, brussels sprouts, and cabbage. They earn their spot as a daily staple because of their rich antioxidant and mineral content including calcium and non-heme iron. Cruciferous vegetables also decrease cancer cell growth and reduce breast cancer risk by 20-40% with just 1-2 servings a day.

You might think of dairy as being the best calcium source, but cows get their calcium from the greens they eat. In fact, the calcium in kale is absorbed better by the body than the calcium in milk! Some leafy greens contain compounds called oxalates that can inhibit calcium absorption, so it's best to focus on calcium-rich greens that are low in oxalates. High oxalate greens to avoid in excessive amounts include spinach, beet greens, and swiss chard. You can still eat these foods, but just don't rely on them for calcium. Kale, bok choy, and collard greens are wonderful low-oxalate calcium sources.

FOODS THAT SHINE:

- ▲ Kale
- ▲ Collard greens
- ▲ Bok choy
- ▲ Broccoli
- ▲ Brussels sprouts
- ▲ Cabbage
(green or purple)
- ▲ Arugula

YOUR DAILY PRACTICE:

Choose one sustainable way to get a daily serving of cruciferous vegetables, and put it on repeat. For example, blend kale into your morning smoothie, or make a daily lunch salad, or include a different veg with dinner every night. Choose the method that is most effortless for you!

No. 5: Vibrant Fruits



Brightly colored fruits provide the body with an abundance of antioxidants. Antioxidants are compounds in our foods that counterbalance oxidative stress. Oxidative stress occurs from many normal processes (exercise, metabolism), but it also occurs in excess from other things like air pollution and eating pro-oxidant foods (processed meat, heme iron, added sugars). Oxidative stress contributes to whole body inflammation, accelerated aging, cancers, and other health conditions.

In addition to limiting your exposure to pro-oxidant foods, eating antioxidant-rich foods like vibrantly colored fruits (and vegetables!) can buffer oxidative stress, bathe your cells in nourishment, and prevent disease formation. When it comes to vibrant fruits, the more colors the better. Each color represents a different antioxidant family with its own health benefits.

Those with deep orange or green colors also provide vitamin C which, when eaten with an iron source, makes it easier for your body to absorb iron. It's a smart practice to include a vitamin C-rich food at every meal to get the most out of the iron sources - think bell peppers, citrus fruit, kiwi, strawberries, and tomatoes.

FOODS THAT SHINE:

- ▲ Berries
(blackberries, raspberries, strawberries, blueberries)
- ▲ Citrus fruits
(oranges, tangerines, grapefruit)
- ▲ Melon
(watermelon, cantaloupe, honeydew)
- ▲ Stone fruits
(peaches, plums, apricots, nectarines)

YOUR DAILY PRACTICE:

Make one of your daily snacks a big bowl or big piece of brightly colored fruit



Your daily practice

1. Add 2 tablespoons of ground flaxseeds or chia seeds, or 3 tablespoons of hemp seeds, or ¼ cup of walnuts to your daily routine
2. Make whole grains the foundation of at least one of your meals each day
3. Include beans or lentils for at least one meal each day
4. Choose one sustainable way to get a daily serving of cruciferous vegetables
5. Make one of your daily snacks a big bowl or big piece of brightly colored fruit

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