

Words on Wellness

YOUR EXTENSION CONNECTION TO NUTRITION AND FITNESS

Fermented Foods Support Your Health



People have been fermenting foods for nearly 10,000 years. Fermented foods we eat today include sourdough bread, yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut, kimchi, and kombucha.

1. In fermentation, Lactobacilli, which are natural bacteria found in fresh vegetables, feed on carbohydrates and excrete lactic acid. The lactic acid helps preserve the vegetables and gives foods a bright color and tangy flavor.
2. Fermented foods have many health benefits. They give the body needed probiotics. Probiotics are microorganisms that live in the gut. They improve digestion, lower inflammation, and strengthen the immune system.
3. To add more fermented foods in your diet, consider the following:
 - Eat yogurt for breakfast or a snack. Enjoy it alone, with fruit, or made into a smoothie.
 - You can also use kefir to make a smoothie. This tangy dairy beverage provides a different variety of Lactobacilli than most yogurts do.
 - Toss a little sauerkraut (fermented cabbage) into a sandwich or wrap.
 - Enjoy tempeh or miso, which are fermented soybeans. Tempeh has a nutty, hearty, mushroom-like flavor. Add it to a noodle bowl with vegetables.
 - Have naturally fermented dill pickles as a snack or a hamburger topping. Most pickles at the grocery store have been packed in vinegar and spices, not fermented. Be sure to buy “naturally fermented” pickles. You can also make your own fermented pickles. For recipes, see the [ISU canning pickles instructions](https://bit.ly/3i7P4yQ), <https://bit.ly/3i7P4yQ>.

Source: [Taking a New Look at Fermented Foods](https://bit.ly/361haJI), bit.ly/361haJI.

Tzatziki and Pita Chips

Serving Size: 1/4 cup tzatziki with 6 pita chips | Serves: 8

Ingredients:

- 1 cucumber (cut in half lengthwise)
- 1 teaspoon garlic (peeled and minced) (about 1–2 cloves)
- 2 containers (6 ounces each) plain Greek yogurt
- 1 teaspoon dried dill and/or fresh mint
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Dried basil, parsley, garlic powder (optional)

Directions:

1. Use a spoon to scrape out seeds from the cucumber. Dice the cucumber into small pieces or shred with a grater.
2. Spread cucumber on paper towels on top of a clean kitchen towel. Roll up the towels and squeeze to remove excess liquid. Transfer dry cucumber to a large bowl.
3. Add the garlic, yogurt, dried dill or fresh mint, salt, and olive oil. Mix. Cover and refrigerate until served.
4. Serve with baked pita chips.

Nutrition information per serving:

210 calories, 7g total fat, 4g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 5mg cholesterol, 5mg sodium, 29g total carbohydrate, 4g fiber, 2g sugar, 8g protein. This recipe is courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach's Spend Smart. Eat Smart. website. For more information, recipes, and videos, visit spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu





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Tend a Garden to Make Your Health Bloom

Spring is finally here, and many families are enjoying the warmer weather by planning their gardens. The fresh produce from gardens certainly improves our diets. As a bonus, gardening helps us be active! The Centers for Disease Control considers gardening a moderate intensity activity. Gardening helps get us the recommended 2 1/2 hours of activity we need each week. Working in a garden allows us to get vitamin D from the sun. It helps relieve stress. It might even lower our risk of dementia!

To learn more health benefits of gardening, listen to the *Sow, Grow, Eat, and Keep* [videos](#), bit.ly/3JiahSB.

Spring Clean Your Refrigerator



A well-organized refrigerator helps reduce food waste and save money. You should aim to deep clean your refrigerator every three to four months. Follow these steps to clean and organize your refrigerator:

1. Remove everything. Throw out food that has spoiled or expired and leftovers more than four days old.
2. Put perishables, such as milk, cheese, yogurt, meat, and eggs, in a cooler with ice or ice packs to keep cold while cleaning the refrigerator.
3. Wash all shelves, drawers, and walls with hot soapy water. Rinse with clean, hot water and let air dry. Replace drawers and shelves once they are dry.
4. Make sure the refrigerator temperature is 40°F or below, so your food is safe to eat.
5. Group similar foods together as you put them back in the refrigerator. Label and date all foods.
 - Crisper drawers: Keep fruits and vegetables.
 - Deli drawers: Store deli meats and cheeses.
 - Lowest shelf: Place raw meats on a plate, so they do not drip onto other foods.
 - Back of refrigerator: Keep milk and eggs, so they stay cold.
 - Door: Store sauces and condiments.
6. Once a year, clean the back and bottom of the fridge. This helps it to operate efficiently.

For more information, watch the Organize Your Fridge [video](#), bit.ly/3CT20IS, on the Spend Smart. Eat Smart. website.