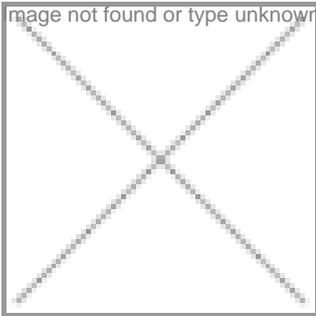


New 'Miracle Foods' Arrive; But What About the Old Ones?



By Ana-Marija Dolaskie — January 20, 2016



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Unless you've been living under a rock for, say, the last century, you've probably seen the term "superfoods" in your nearby grocery store. Or on Dr. Oz, or anywhere suspect nutrition fads are passed off as science.

Though there is no evidence to prove their worth, superfoods are always pegged as nutrient powerhouses that contain high amounts of things like antioxidants and vitamins. When a new fad hits, advocates rush to recommend including them in your daily diet, with the suggestion they can prevent chronic illness, cardiovascular issues and even cancer.

Just recently, the *Washington Post* [published an article predicting what food fads would take off this year](#) [2]. Food crazes have been around since the 17th century, yet now they are happening faster than ever. Blueberries are getting swapped for acaÃ berry, and oats are being replaced with quinoa faster than you can say ... quinoa.

What happened to all those old superfoods that were supposed to make us stop aging and live worry free? Let's take a look at some of the past superfood trends and their present counterparts:

1. Kale, Spinach & Swiss Chard

Kale: the modern version of spinach, because spinach is so 1998. Advocates say kale is a superstar on its own, containing a type of phytonutrient that has shown to reduce the risk of some cancers. But in the world of leafy greens, there is fierce competition.

Meet swiss chard a green vegetable commonly used in Mediterranean cooking, and kale's less popular counterpart, is now the new spinach. But how can that be when kale was *literally just* the new spinach? Because swiss chard has one thing that kale and spinach don't: syringic acid. Advocates claim syringic acid has shown to be beneficial in regulating blood sugar by inhibiting an enzyme called alpha-glucosidase, and slowing down the carb breakdown to simple sugars. Recent studies have shown that chard leaves contain as many as 13 different polyphenol antioxidants (those found in veggies), including kaempferol a flavonoid also found in broccoli, kale, and

strawberries.

2. Green Tea has met its Match[a]

Green tea has been used in Chinese medicine for centuries, treating everything from the common cold to depression. It contains various vitamins, potassium and caffeine, but is mostly known for containing catechins a type of antioxidant. It's supposed health benefits crossed over to the Western world years ago, but recent research has caused green tea to take a hit from activists, who claim that the herb can be that wonderful, all-purpose Boogeyman an endocrine disruptor, a term we at the Council are not too crazy about because it applies to anything groups want to scare people about.

It may be a non-issue, since *new and improved green tea* is already making waves among the organic food industry. Matcha, a very fine ground powder, is a product of green tea. This new-and-improved cancer-fighting, fat-burning, energy-boosting, breakup-healing (wait, what??) tea is thought to have all the benefits of green tea and more. Bonus for people who like to eat plants: Rather than sipping only green tea-infused water, matcha allows you to ingest the entire leaf, since the tea comes in a powder form. It is on all the food fad lists for 2016.

3. The seeds: Flax, Hemp, now Chia

Chia seeds are not to be confused with your favorite chia pet of the 1990s, but they *are* touted as a superfood. Native to Mexico, they provide more fiber than their earlier counterparts, and people sprinkle them on yogurts, smoothies and oatmeal.

Like flax and hemp seeds, chia seeds contain omega-3 fatty acids. Hemp is making it into all kinds of food lists this year too, especially in places like Colorado.

4. Got [Soy, Almond, or Cashew] Milk?

The days of 2-percent milk are over and both dairy purists and cows everywhere are rejoicing. For those with dairy intolerance, soy milk has always been a good alternative. Then there was coconut milk for a brief second. But since then, almond and cashew alternatives have hit the market.

Almond milk is rich in calcium and vitamins D, E and A. But unless you buy the unsweetened version, the original flavor is loaded with sugar. And, contrary to popular belief, almond milk has virtually no protein, thus it is not an ideal alternative to cow's milk. Though it doesn't yet have the momentum, cashew milk is trying: rich in calcium, low in calories, and extremely low in protein. Not many food fad lists have this on it yet, perhaps because it is nut-based.

5. Cacao Powder: Have Your Chocolate and Drink it, Too

While chocolate particularly dark chocolate was getting rave reviews for its host of benefits for heart health and blood pressure just a few years ago, those days are now gone and another form has been brewing up some popularity: cacao powder. It's the raw form of chocolate that contains the same flavonoids as candy companies would love you to believe make chocolate bars healthy. Some like that the powder has a strong chocolate taste, without a guilty conscience, because cacao contains virtually no fat.

There's no room to include everything in a short list. There is certain to be something that will be

touted as the new resveratrol. Red wine is now on the naughty list after a solid run as a miracle food. And since there is a new generation of potential buyers out there, perhaps it is time for 1980s miracle foods like oat bran and psyllium to make a comeback.

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