



No Brainer Brain Foods: Foods That Fuel Healthy Brains.

This article, my friends, is going to be a super value “brain” bomb. It’s going to teach you how to feed yourself and your kiddos to increase brainpower, which, in my opinion, is the most important part of planning and preparing meals. Ever since I started learning about the benefits of brain boosting foods I make sure that all our meals are loaded with brain nourishing foods. So please, take your time with this information and take it to heart. You might want to make notes and no matter how funky some of the foods may seem to you, please try them out. You will be surprised how great they will make your body feel and how soon your palate will crave these foods over less nutritious foods.

It’s true, certain foods make us and our kids feel great and other foods do the opposite – they spike our blood sugar and leave us feeling sluggish, hungry and less likely to smash out a creative day. Here’s why - some foods satiate and soothe the body better than others (like brain foods) and some foods create sugar spikes, increase bodily inflammation and cause a whole host of problems like obesity, high cholesterol, brain fog and diabetes (just to rattle off a few). Brain foods, the nourishing, calming and

balancing foods, are full of healthy fats and nutrients that actually reduce inflammation and intercept inflammatory patterns within the body. This means that the body will become less prone to all the bad stuff I just mentioned. These healthy brain foods include cold-water fatty fish and other fatty foods – which I will mention in a second - whereas processed foods, that are high in sugars like cereals, chips, pizza, sodas and packaged products (think standard American diet), don’t include healthy nourishing fats, but they do make us fat.

Ok, to get a bit science-y, let me explain what kind of fats are the good brain nourishing and anti-inflammatory fats. They are called polyunsaturated fatty acids, often shortened down to “PUFAS”. These fats are most commonly found in salmon, mackerel, sardines, and other fatty fish. We also get healthy brain nourishing fats from olives, olive oil, coconut, coconut oil, other unrefined oils, nuts, avocados, butter, ghee, cocoa butter and flax.

There are many easy, tasty and delicious ways to incorporate these brain-boosting foods into your diet, into your kid’s meals, and into their school lunches. One super easy way to do so is to stock your pantry with BPA free wild caught canned fish and mash a can or two up with diced veggies to make a brain-boosting pate. I like to use my pate as a spread on nori. I call these my “brain boosting sardine sushis” - you can call them whatever you wish and here is my quick and easy recipe:

Mash-up canned salmon, mackerel, tuna, sardines, oysters, snails, or your choice of seafood, and pair with diced tomatoes, diced garlic, diced scallion, a bit of healthy oil, some ground flax, a dash of herbs and wrap it all in a sheet of slightly moistened nori. (Enjoy! See how easy?!)

Some of my other favorite ways to work with brain boosting foods is to simply grill. I like to do a big batch of salmon and veggies. After I grill I use the salmon and veggies for salads, skewers, hash to go with eggs, salmon burgers, pate, and the list goes on. When it comes to canned foods, like olives, I pair them up with salami and cherry tomatoes and place on a toothpick for tasty little treats (my kids love to find this treat in their lunch box).

Coconut oil and coconut shreds can be added to salads, puddings, and even tossed in with popcorn for a sweet and salty snack. Of course the awesome avocado has a bazillion applications – from guacamole, to sandwich spread, to the perfect “nest” to bake eggs in. Seriously, I never have difficulties finding ways to use these foods. The possibilities are endless, so do what sounds good to you. Make it work for your family and have fun tasting and experimenting with all these foods.

And, because most people are afraid of even opening a can of sardines, I want to really talk them up. Sardines are one of the most nutrient dense, healthy and brain soothing foods on the planet. They are a very small cold-water fish, which means fewer chances of high mercury levels. Sardines are cheap, portable and versatile. I recommend the Wild Planet brand, King Oscar or even Chicken of the Sea... some of the other brands are mushy and less tasty. The more you eat and play around with recipes using these delicious little fish, the more you are going to grow to love them.

When you add these brain boosting foods to your diet you are also, by default, creating a less acidic and less inflammatory state within your body and you are promoting increased feelings of satiation, better mood, better focus and even more restful and recuperative sleep. So go eat some delicious PUFAS and let me know how your brain is feeling. Also, make it a point to put brain boosting foods in each and every recipe and lunch you prepare – I bet, in little time, you will see a massive difference in how your kids are feeling and operating at school and around your healthy home.

Peace and PUFAS –
Over and Out,

Jessa