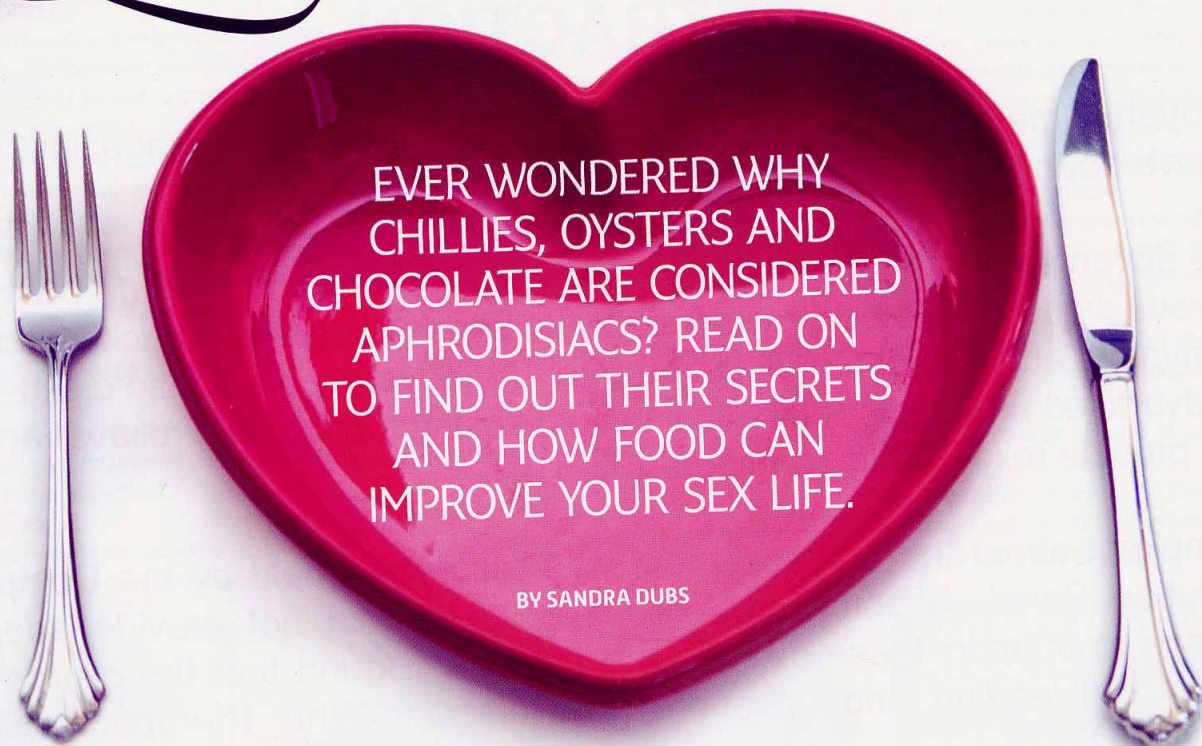


Love bites



Food and sex are two of our primordial needs. Food ensures the survival of the individual while sexual activity ensures survival of the species. Indeed, food and sex are inextricably linked. A great benefit of eating a healthy diet is a healthy libido or sex drive, and this is an essential part of a rounded life.

The erotic power of food has been celebrated for centuries. Casanova was said to share oysters with his paramours to whet their sexual appetites. Greek and Roman cultures enjoyed a parade of ripe fruits and exotic dishes before engaging in sensual pleasures. It has even been said that a delicious meal is the quickest way to a man's (or woman's) heart. Sharing food can be very romantic.

SEXY NUTRITION

Good nutrition does play a vital role in love and lovemaking. The quality of your diet has a great deal to do with the quality of your sex. Many nutritious foods can stir libido, revive sexual function and enhance overall health, especially when served up in a sensual way.

The dietary ingredients for a wonderful sex life include a variety of fresh, wholesome fruits and vegetables and lean proteins. Complex carbohydrates including whole grains (brown rice, oats, quinoa, millet) root

vegetables (carrots, sweet potato, daikon radish), dry beans and lentils, fresh green vegetables (green beans, broccoli) as well as sea vegetables (nori, wakame, dulse) and some fruit support a healthy sex life. Quality lean proteins should be about 20-30 per cent of your daily kilojoules. Meals rich in fruits and vegetables provide beneficial nutrients that keep organs in peak condition and energy at maximum levels, both essential for lovemaking.

Although some foods arouse, others can impair sexual function. Fried foods and rich, creamy sauces can leave you feeling more sluggish than sexy. Excessive sugar, salt, saturated fat and highly processed foods are linked to frigidity, difficulty reaching orgasm and lack of interest in sex. Cutting back on these foods will help revive and preserve sexual vitality and enhance overall wellbeing. It's also a good idea to limit consumption of alcohol and coffee and to skip tobacco altogether, as these can put out the sexual fire and desire and leech nutrients that are vital to our sexual health.

FOODS TO PUT YOU IN THE MOOD

Research has discovered that some of the best known edible aphrodisiacs do contain certain vitamins and minerals that contribute to a healthy reproductive system, if not a

healthy libido. Chillies, for example, may heat up your sex life because of the capsaicin, which stimulates nerve endings to release chemicals, raising the heart rate and possibly triggering the release of endorphins, giving the pleasurable feeling of a natural high.

And let's not forget chocolate. The good mood that comes after eating chocolate is not just because of its great taste. The cocoa used in chocolate contains phenylalanine, an amino acid that raises your body's endorphin levels, which are natural antidepressants. Phenylalanine occurs naturally in the brain and is released when emotions are aroused. Chocolate with a high percentage of cocoa also contains theobromine and caffeine, both of which have been shown to increase alertness. So, enjoyed in small doses, chocolate and, more particularly, cocoa can lift libido and arousal during foreplay.

SEXY FRUITS

Bursting with fibre and antioxidants, and thought to be imbued with aphrodisiac properties, many fresh fruits are as sensual as they are nutritious. Apples, apricots, bananas, cherries, coconut, dates, figs, grapes, mangoes, papaya, peaches, pears, plums, pomegranates, quince, raspberries and strawberries are celebrated in erotic literature throughout the world.

BANANAS This fruit contain potassium and B vitamins, which increase energy. It's probably the psychology associated with their shape, though, that has the greatest aphrodisiac effect.

AVOCADO The Aztecs called the avocado tree *ahuacatl*, which means "testicle tree". The ancients thought the fruit hanging in pairs on the tree resembled testicles. This is a delicious fruit that is undeniably sensual — so much so that the Spanish conquistadors helped spread throughout the world its reputation as a powerful stimulant.

FIGS An open fig is thought to look like the female sex organs and is traditionally thought of as sexual stimulant. A man breaking open a fig and eating it in front of his lover is a powerful erotic act.



Figs — as sexy as they look.

Undermourishment creates a loss of libido and reduces fertility rates.

RASPBERRIES AND STRAWBERRIES

Perfect foods for hand-feeding your lover, both raspberries and strawberries invite love and are described in erotic literature as "fruit nipples". Both are high in vitamin C and make a sweet, light dessert.

SALUBRIOUS VEGETABLES

Asparagus, carrots, celery, corn, cucumbers, eggplant and several other phallic-shaped vegetables have long been prized for their aphrodisiac effects. Seaweed is also classified as an aphrodisiac the world over. Although it may be hard to think of them as "erotic", these earthly delights certainly invigorate the body with vitamins and minerals. Other foods reputed to turn up the heat and fortify the body include beans, garlic, leeks, onions, parsley, peppers, soybeans, spinach, truffles, turnips and watercress. Serve these foods often for optimal sexual health.

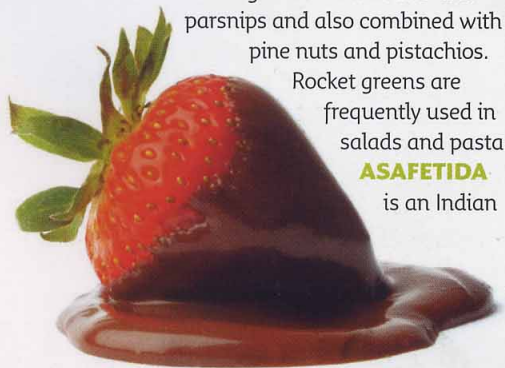
PANTRY PLEASERS

These herbs and spices from your pantry have reputations as aphrodisiacs.

ROCKET SEED has been documented as an aphrodisiac since the 1st century CE, when it was added to grated orchid bulbs and parsnips and also combined with pine nuts and pistachios.

Rocket greens are frequently used in salads and pasta.

ASAFETIDA is an Indian



dried and powdered herb used as a sexual stimulant in Ayurvedic medicine. It has a very strong, garlicky flavour.

ASPARAGUS, due to its erotic shape, has long been regarded as an erotic stimulant and, in fact, is high in vitamin E, considered one of the sex hormone stimulants.

BASIL is said to stimulate sex drive and boost fertility. It's also believed to produce a general sense of wellbeing.

CHILLIES may heat up your sex life, too, because of the capsaicin, which stimulates nerve endings to release certain chemicals, raising the heart rate and possibly triggering the release of endorphins, giving the pleasurable feeling of a natural high.

CORIANDER (CILANTRO SEED)

The book of the *Arabian Nights* tells the tale of a merchant who had been childless for 40 years but was cured by a concoction that included coriander.

FENNEL In the 1930s, fennel was found to be a source of natural plant oestrogens, but the use of fennel as an aphrodisiac dates back to the ancient Egyptians who used it as a libido enhancement.

GARLIC The "heat" in garlic is said to stir sexual desires. Make sure you and your partner share it, though. Garlic has been used for centuries to cure everything from the common cold to heart ailments. Enjoy pasta with a light garlic sauce and it might lead to something spicy in the bedroom later.

GINGER ROOT raw, cooked or crystallised is a stimulant to the circulatory system. Perhaps a stirfry with freshly grated ginger can heat things up in the bedroom, too.

LICORICE The Chinese have used licorice for medicinal purposes since ancient times. Chewing on bits of licorice root is said to enhance feelings of love and lust. It is particularly stimulating for women.

MUSTARD is believed to stimulate the sexual glands and increase desire. Prepare a tenderloin roast (filet mignon) for two with a mustard and peppercorn sauce.

NUTMEG was highly prized by Chinese women as an aphrodisiac. In quantity,

nutmeg can produce a hallucinogenic effect. A light sprinkling of it in pumpkin soup can help spice up your evening.

SEA VEGETABLES (SEAWEEDS)

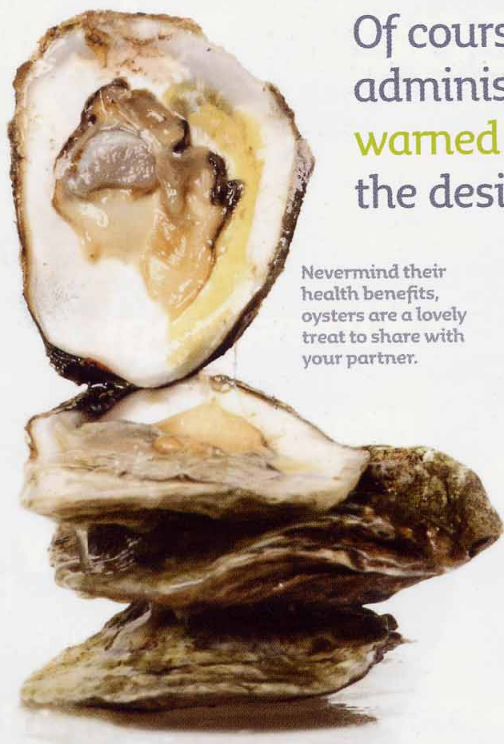
From a nutritional standpoint, it's easy to see why seaweed is classified as an aphrodisiac the world over. Low in fat and calories, it is rich in vitamin B₁, which combats fatigue and depression. Seaweed's B₂ content aids in hormone production. Seaweed also boasts a dose of vitamin E, which helps in the maintenance of healthy sperm by fighting free radicals in the sperm membrane. (It can take as much as three months of steady vitamin E doses to reap this reward.) Vitamin E has also proven useful in helping to regulate the function of sex glands. In addition, seaweed contains soluble fibre, iodine and selenium. Nori, the seaweed used in sushi, is valued for its protein content, which comprises as much as 30 per cent of this seaweed's dry weight. Finally, seaweed is a good source of manganese, a mineral known to help maintain a healthy sex drive.

VANILLA The scent and flavour of vanilla are believed to increase lust. According to the Australian Orchid Society, "Old Totonac lore has it that Xanat, the young daughter of the Mexican fertility goddess, loved a Totonac youth. Unable to marry him because of her divine nature, she transformed herself into a plant that would provide pleasure and happiness." Fill tall Champagne glasses to the rim and add a vanilla bean for a heady, bubbly treat.

SEA OF LOVE

Seafood, including abalone, oysters, clams, scallops, lobster and deep, coldwater fish such as cod and halibut, fuels the body, brain and the sex drive. Oysters, long considered the food of love, are rich in zinc and iodine. Iodine supports metabolism and zinc is essential for testosterone production in men and women.

Other sources of zinc are whole grains, especially the germ of bran and oatmeal, beans (lentils, chickpeas) corn, onions, →



Nevermind their health benefits, oysters are a lovely treat to share with your partner.

Of course, as an aphrodisiac, alcohol must be administered in careful doses. As Shakespeare warned of the temptation of the bottle, "It increases the desire, but it takes away the performance."

seeds (pumpkin, sesame, sunflower) and eggs. Refining and processing food removes zinc, so eating white flour, rice and sugar can contribute to zinc deficiency.

ALCOHOL: LIGHT THE FIRE OR PUT OUT THE FLAME

Alcohol is considered an aphrodisiac for its physiological and psychological effects. We all know what happens when the first sip of a drink hits the bloodstream and the world becomes a warmer and more glowing place. Champagne is a particularly effective aphrodisiac. Known as the drink of love, it certainly lowers inhibitions and creates a glow. The pop of the cork and the tickling of bubbles on the nose make it much more than an inhibition assistant. Life becomes a

celebration with Champagne in the glass.

Of course, as an aphrodisiac, alcohol must be administered in careful doses. As Shakespeare warned of the temptation of the bottle, "It increases the desire, but it takes away the performance."

A glass or two of wine can greatly enhance a romantic interlude. Wine relaxes and helps to stimulate our senses. Drinking wine can be an erotic experience. A moderate amount of wine has been said to arouse, but much more than that amount will have the reverse affect.

SUPPLEMENTS FOR INSURANCE

Although a healthy diet provides most of the nutrients necessary for sexual wellness, a multivitamin/mineral supplement offers extra health insurance. Vitamin A, the B group and vitamins C and E are necessary for sexual functioning. B vitamins, including niacin and B5, can help men and women reach orgasm and improve their sexual stamina. Selenium, manganese and zinc are also vital in regulating hormones and revving up the sex drive. Rather than take these individually, choose a multivitamin/mineral to ensure correct dosages.

FEELING SEXY AND BEING SEXY

Whole natural foods support general health. According to Japanese folklore, men should eat more animal protein, women more vegetables. The male portion should be larger and he should be given a small dish of salted fish or beans to keep him in balance between overexpansion and weakness.

Women are more efficient at building up tissue because they must grow babies within their bodies. They also tend to put on weight easily and have a harder time losing it. According to leading nutritional consultant Annemarie Colbin PhD in *Food and Healing*, "Men are more efficient in breaking down tissue, perhaps because they discharge protein, carbohydrates and minerals during sex and lose weight easily." So men do need more protein and vegetarian men need to eat more beans.

Choosing food wisely will provide energy, stamina and sexual desire. A complete lovers' collection of recipes is beyond what can be fitted in this space but here are three healthy recipes using some of the foods mentioned to add to your repertoire of healthy eating and vital sexuality. ☺

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Azuki bean spread

- 1 tin organic azuki beans
- 2 tbsp miso paste
- 1/3 cup hot water
- 2 tbsp organic tahini
- 1 tbsp umeboshi paste (optional)
- Ginger to taste
- Herbs (optional)
- Sea vegetable seasoning as garnish/sprinkle

Drain beans and place in blender. Dilute miso in hot water and add to blender with other ingredients. Adjust flavour and consistency to taste. Spread on crackers or use as a topping for steamed vegies and cooked brown rice. Sprinkle with seasoning.

Lentil walnut pâté

- 150g green lentils
- 1 bay leaf
- Water

To cook the lentils

Cook the lentils together with the bay leaf in water to cover by 5cm. Bring to the boil, then lower the heat to a simmer for 30-40 minutes, until tender. Drain (you can use the cooking liquid for soup or stock).

- 1 cup walnuts
- 1 tbsp EVOO (extra virgin olive oil)
- 1 tbsp mirin

- 3 cups onions, diced
- 1 tbsp minced garlic
- 1 tbsp umeboshi paste
- 2 tbsp shiro miso
- 1 tbsp basil
- Lettuce cups & slivers of spring onions for garnish

Roast the walnuts at 180°C for 6-8 minutes. Allow to cool. Heat the oil and mirin in a skillet and in it sauté the onion and garlic, stirring frequently, until slightly browned, about 5 minutes. Combine the roasted walnuts, cooked lentils, onion mixture and remaining ingredients in a food processor and puree. Serve in small scoops on lettuce cups garnished with slivers of spring onions and crackers or chips.

Quinoa arame with asparagus & miso mustard dressing

- 1 cup quinoa
- 1 1/2 cups water
- Sea salt
- 8 asparagus spears
- 3 tbsp EVOO
- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 1/2-1 bunch chives,
- 1 cob pre-cooked corn kernels
- Handful arame, soaked in warm water for

- 10 minutes
- 4-5 dried shiitake mushrooms, presoaked for at least 30 minutes
- 10-12 snowpeas or green beans, sliced & blanched in salted water
- 1/2 cup walnuts, roasted and chopped

Miso mustard dressing

- 3 tbsp miso paste
- 2 tbsp mustard
- 1 tbsp rice syrup or agave syrup

Dissolve miso, mustard and syrup in 1 cup of water. To cook quinoa, follow the packet instructions or wash the grains well first, place in a saucepan with water and a pinch of sea salt, bring to the boil, cover and reduce the heat for 10 minutes. Lightly steam the asparagus. In a pot, fry the onions in the oil until translucent. Stir in the chopped chives, corn kernels, arame and sliced shiitake. Continue frying for 5 minutes. Spoon the fried mix into the cooked quinoa. Add the miso/mustard/syrup mixture and snowpeas or green beans. Add the asparagus and walnuts.