



Calm your mind with foods

Facing stressful and worry-filled moments? For many, the reaction may be to indulge in foods that give you comfort. And these foods will most likely be filled with salt, fat, sugar and unhealthy ingredients. Stress eating is something almost all of us do at some point or another.

However, it's not all wrong. While it's not good to overindulge as a coping mechanism, there are foods that can help calm your feelings. Healthy foods can affect your body and mind in a positive way.



People eat
35-40%
more food
when experiencing
stress¹

Stress can cause emotional and physical symptoms like:²



Irritability



Muscle pain
and tension



Anger



Difficulty sleeping



Tiredness
(fatigue)



Digestive troubles

**Unresolved stress can lead to long-term issues
like those listed above and more.²**

Eating (for) your feelings

There is a well-known relationship between nutrition and physical health. There is also a strong link to mental health and emotional well-being.³ That is where the terms “comfort food” and “hangry” come from. Research shows that nutrient-dense foods improve mental health.⁴ Include a variety of fruits, vegetables, lean proteins and whole grains in your diet. Foods rich in antioxidants, omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin D and probiotic fiber are plentiful and delicious. Consider adding the following to your meals:



Beans and legumes

Pinto, black, navy, red or kidney beans, lentils and peas



Fruits

Apples, prunes, cherries, plums, berries, apricots, peaches and oranges



Nuts and seeds

Almonds, walnuts and pecans, flax and sunflower seeds



Vegetables

Artichokes, kale, cabbage, spinach, carrots, mushrooms, tomato, cucumber, beets and broccoli



Healthy fats

Olives, avocados, nuts (walnuts, almonds) and oily fish (salmon, sardines)



Herbs and spices

Cinnamon, garlic, dill, parsley, turmeric and black pepper

Remember that your body and mind are linked. What you feed your body will also affect your brain and feelings. Consider the following recipes to make you feel good from top to bottom.



Hot chocolate with cinnamon and black pepper

Makes: 2 servings | Prep: 5 min | Cook: 10 min

Adding spice to hot chocolate cuts the sweetness while adding complexity to the flavor.⁵

Ingredients

- 1 oz dark chocolate (chips or squares)
- 2 cups low or non-fat milk of your choice
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- Pinch of ground black pepper

Preparation

Place the chocolate in a medium heatproof bowl. Warm the milk, vanilla, cinnamon and pepper in a saucepan over medium heat. When bubbles form around the edges of the milk, remove from the heat. Pour it over the chocolate and mix until blended. Serve in two mugs.

Nutrition

Per serving



Calories: 176 | total fat: 6 g | saturated fat: 4 g | sodium: 137 mg | cholesterol: 5 mg
total carbs: 20 g | fiber: 2 g | sugars: 16 g | protein: 9 g | potassium: 532 mg

Mushroom and spinach frittata

Makes: 6 servings | Prep: 10 min | Cook: 18 min

A frittata is easy to make and can be packed with nutrients, depending on the vegetables you add. This version has antioxidants and fiber from the spinach and vitamin D from the mushrooms.⁶



Ingredients

- 5 eggs
- 1 cup unflavored, unsweetened almond milk (or other milk of your choice)
- ½ tsp sea salt
- ¼ tsp ground black pepper
- 1½ tsp dried parsley
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup spinach, fresh or frozen (thawed and drained)
- 1 cup mushrooms, chopped

Preparation

Preheat the oven to 350°F and line a casserole dish with parchment paper. In a medium-sized bowl, whisk the eggs with the milk, salt, pepper and parsley and set aside. Heat the olive oil in a frying pan over medium heat. Sauté the spinach and mushrooms in the oil until the mushrooms are lightly brown, about 3 minutes. Allow to cool. Place the cooled mushroom-spinach mixture in the casserole dish. Pour the egg mixture over the vegetables, cover with foil and bake until the eggs are just set, 15–18 minutes. The frittata is cooked when it's just firm to the touch. Cut into 6 pieces and serve.

Nutrition

Per serving



Calories: 98 | total fat: 7 g | saturated fat: 2 g | sodium: 314 mg | cholesterol: 175 mg
total carbs: 2 g | fiber: 1 g | sugars: 0 g | protein: 7 g | potassium: 88 mg

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¹<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17437199.2021.1923406#abstract>

²<https://www.apa.org/topics/stress/anxiety-difference>

³<https://www.mdpi.com/2076-328X/15/8/1007>

⁴<https://psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.pn.2025.01.1.18>

⁵<https://umanaidoomd.com/blogs/recipes>

⁶<https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/healthy-weight/diet-reviews/mediterranean-diet/>