**Suffer From Stress or Anxiety? 18 Foods You Should Add To Your Diet**

Modern life can be stressful. That’s putting it mildly!

People are, on average, working longer hours, as well as having less time to spend with their loved ones, and fewer people have time to engage in hobbies that can help them to feel calmer. The end result is that many people begin to suffer from stress and/or anxiety, neither of which are good for physical or mental health. Indeed, studies conducted by the NHS show stress and associated illnesses, such as anxiety and depression, continue to be the leading cause of absence from work in the UK. That’s not good!

Of course, there are options to manage anxiety and stress, which involve yoga, therapy and, in clinical cases, medication. However, were you aware that you can reduce the physical and psychological aspects of both of these issues by altering your diet?

Indeed, many people who suffer from chronic stress or anxiety have explored changing their diet to reduce stimulants and sugars, to find that it does indeed have an impact on their mental state.

So, if you are looking for a more natural way to reduce your stress levels, read on, as here, you will be walked through 18 foods that can help to alleviate your stress levels.

**Avocados**

Influencers on YouTube and now TikTok have been raving about avocados for a while now, leading this fruit to be labeled as a superfood.

It's easy to see why! Avocados are rich in healthy fats and B vitamins, both of which are vital for maximum brain health. In other words, this simple fruit reduces stress by supporting the nervous systems and helping with blood pressure levels. Also, this fruit can help to manage a physical side effect of stress, which is stress-induced hypertension.

**Blueberries**

Another fruit that has been labeled as a superfood is the blueberry.

Research by the [University of East Anglia](https://research-portal.uea.ac.uk/en/publications/recent-research-on-the-health-benefits-of-blueberries-and-their-a) has shown the blueberries are one of the richest sources of antioxidants, as well as vitamin C and flavonoids, all of which reduce stress by reducing inflammation in the body. They also reduce oxidative stress in the brain, which can help to reduce the symptoms of anxiety and chronic stress. The antioxidants also prevent the brain from becoming damaged, and also help to boost healthy brain function too!

**Dark Chocolate**

A lot of people love chocolate.

However, many people love the type of chocolate that is high in sugar, known as milk chocolate.

Studies by the [University of Calgary](https://neurosciencenews.com/dark-chocolate-depression-14641/#:~:text=Eating%20dark%20chocolate%20can%20help%20reduce%20anxiety%20and,symptoms%20than%20those%20who%20did%20not%20eat%20chocolate.) have, however, found a saving grace with some chocolate, in particular dark chocolates, and have looked out how this chocolate type can help improve overall health. It has higher levels of magnesium than milk chocolates, which is known for having calming properties, as well as those good old flavonoids, which reduce stress and minimize the production of cortisol (the stress hormone). As well as this, dark chocolate ups the production of endorphins and ups serotonin levels, both of which are important for a better mood, and stress reduction.

**Chamomile Tea**

When someone is very stressed out, or has high levels of anxiety, their sleep will likely be affected. Then, it becomes harder to regulate moods effectively and stress levels climb.

Chamomile tea is something that everyone should have to hand, especially if they are going through a tough period, as it has both antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, which help to reduce anxiety and, again, help to reduce cortisol levels.

**Salmon (or other fatty fish)**

There have been a lot of articles by nutritionists talking about the benefits of eating salmon, or other fatty fish like mackerel.

Both are tasty and versatile but, when it comes to stress and anxiety, fatty fish can help to alleviate both. In particular, salmon is dense in omega-3 fatty acids, such as DHA and EPA, both of which have been found to have anti-inflammatory properties. As is the trend with reducing anxiety and stress, anti-inflammatories are the way to go, more so if they concur naturally! The fatty acids also play a vital role in overall brain health and help to reduce that pesky stress hormone cortisol and even adrenaline.

**Almonds**

Almonds are a tasty snack, that can be consumed on the go, or thrown in with cereals and oatmeal.

The plus side of consuming almonds is that they are high in magnesium, which helps the body to better regulate cortisol levels, which during times of stress and anxiety, is very high. Much like fatty fish, almonds are also a good source of healthy fats, as well as providing a good source of protein and fiber, all of which help to stabilize blood sugar and reduce stress in the body.

**Turmeric**

A member of the ginger family, turmeric is a plant that not only makes food taste better, but it can also help to reduce stress levels and anxiety.

Turmeric contains a compound called curcumin, which has long been linked to having both anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. As you have likely guessed by now, both of these are essential for helping to minimize anxiety and stress, as high levels of inflammation have been linked to anxiety and prolonged stress.

**Spinach**

When you have high levels of stress or anxiety in your life, you will likely have higher levels of cortisol, which is the stress hormone. To minimize the impact and production of cortisol, you will want foods that are high in magnesium. Spinach is a tasty vegetable that can be added to almost any savory food and will boost your magnesium levels, thereby reducing your anxiety. It also contains folate, which helps to create serotonin in the brain and gut. In spinach, there is also a lot of iron, which has been linked to maintaining higher levels of energy, as well as healthy oxygen flow to the brain. So, maybe Popeye was onto something!

**Greek Yogurt**

A lot of people love yogurt, but were you aware that it can also help as an anti-anxiety and mood booster?

Yogurt, especially GreeK yogurt, is full of probiotics, which help to improve the gut biome, which has been found to improve overall mood, and lower stress levels. As well as this, yogurt can also help the brain to create gamma-aminobutyric acid, or GABA, which is a chemical that helps to break down cortisol, as well as promote relaxation. If you can, aim to get a Greek yogurt that is sugar-free, or has as little sugar as possible, as too much sugar can cause an inflammatory response in the body.

**Green Tea**

Another tea that is work looking at if you have high levels of anxiety and/or stress is green tea.

Much like chamomile, green tea contains chemicals that reduce stress, without causing you to feel drowsy. One of these is L-theanine, which is an amino acid that increases dopamine, serotonin and GABA, all of which help to minimize anxiety and cortisol. So, it is well worth adding green tea to your daily drink list, especially if you are looking for a way to increase alertness.

**Oatmeal**

Unless you have a gluten intolerance, it can be well worth looking into adding oatmeal to your diet if you are suffering from chronic stress or anxiety.

[Research into mood regulation](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41380-022-01479-w) has long established that the gut and the brain are linked, and that the high fiber properties of oatmeal make it ideal for renourishing the gut biome, thereby helping to improve the levels of serotonin in the brain. As well as this, oats contain antioxidants, such as avenanthramides, which are anti-inflammatory in nature. Higher levels of inflammation through the body have been linked to higher rates of anxiety, as well as stress responses, so a tasty bowl of oatmeal each day can help to keep stress at bay!

**Seeds**

Chia and flax seeds have come to the attention of the media in recent years, due to their popularity among the vegan community. However, both of these seeds, as well as pumpkin seeds have been linked to improved stress and anxiety levels, due to their high levels of magnesium and potassium.

**Eggs**

Much like other sources of animal protein, eggs can reduce stress as they contain tryptophan, and B vitamins, both of which can help with the production of serotonin and dopamine in the brain.

**Oranges and Citrus Fruits**

Studies have found that if you consume higher levels of vitamin C, such as oranges and other citrus fruits, you are less likely to experience high stress levels. So, add orange juice to your breakfast, or even an orange to your lunch each day to reap the benefits of this juicy and nutrient dense fruit.

**Asparagus**

Asparagus is high in folate, which is a B-vitamin linked to regular creation of those all important brain chemicals associated with improved mood, such as serotonin and dopamine. Also, asparagus is high in anti-inflammatories, which have been indicated in reducing anxiety and chronic stressors.

**Nuts**

Almonds, walnuts, cashews…all of these are great for managing and reducing anxiety levels, as well as stress levels. All nuts are high in B-vitamin folate, and have also been found to be a high source of fiber, which helps with the gut-brain connection.

**Whole Grains**

Whole grains are complex carbohydrates and, as such, they help to stabilize blood sugar and to reduce stress levels. They are also high in magnesium and B-vitamins, which help with the creation of mood-important brain chemicals like serotonin and dopamine.

**Garlic**

It may not be the nicest smelling food on the list, but regular consumption of garlic can help with gut health, which thereby improves mental health, as well as being rich in antioxidants and B-vitamins. So, maybe start with only one clove per pasta meal if you are new to this tasty and fragrant vegetable.