

Super Smoothies

The Ultimate Guide to
Microbiome-Boosting Smoothies



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Super Smoothies Guide

6 Smoothie Building Tips for Optimal Health

Creating the perfect smoothie means more than simply tossing a bunch of ingredients into a blender.

Smoothies are easy to make, and they're nicely portable. They're ideal in the summer time but fit into a busy schedule in any season.

Knowing what turns a good smoothie into an awesome one is a matter of knowing what to add and what to limit or omit.

This guide will help you pick the best ingredients for tasty smoothies. Your blender delights will keep your body healthy and your microbiome happy.

Things to consider:

Smoothies deliver more nutrients. All plants have cells with tough protective outer walls. Locked inside are the nutrients necessary for good health.

Chewing alone releases only 70-90% of the plant's nutrients. The rest passes through the body unabsorbed. Blending more completely breaks open cell walls and increases the absorption of nutrients.

Vary the ingredients in your smoothies to help fill your body with many nutrients. Include stems of green leafies and carrot and celery leaves. These often-discarded plant parts add their distinct nutrients.

Step 1: Choose your

Liquid

Step 2: Add your

Greens

Step 3: Pick your

Fruit

Step 4: Add some

Seeds

Step 5: Enhance with

Veggies & Spices

Keep the fat content low. Sure, avocados, nuts, and seeds are good foods. But, in large amounts, they bring too much fat and calories. If your goals include weight loss or lowering cholesterol or blood glucose, be mindful of how much of these foods you use. Even plant-based milk and yogurt can contain fat, so check the label before you add.

Chew your smoothie. Yes, the blender has liquified the ingredients but, you should still chew your smoothie as if it were solid food. To get the most nutrients from high-fiber carbohydrates, like the fruits and veggies you added to the blender, you must start digestion at the start. That's in your mouth. Amylase is an enzyme produced by the salivary glands when you chew. It begins the chemical breakdown of carbohydrates. If you don't chew your smoothie, your healthy breakfast is at best mediocre.

Drink your smoothie slowly. Tasty and refreshing, smoothies can go down fast. Food that hits the stomach quickly triggers weight gain and increases blood sugar and blood pressure. It's helpful to drink your smoothie in the same time that it would take to eat the ingredients whole. 20-30 minutes should do the trick.



Here are 7 tips to ensure your smoothies are as delicious and nutritious as possible:

1. Choose a base liquid. The choice of a base liquid can make or break the texture and flavor of your smoothie. Here are some great options:

- Water has no fat or calories. It is best for weight loss and reducing cholesterol or blood sugar. Water also contains essential nutrients not found in other beverages.
- Soy milk's anti-cancer phytoestrogens help to protect against male and female reproductive cancers. The higher calorie and fat content may be worthwhile when you consider that soy can slow elevations in PSA and ease the symptoms of menopause.
- Almond milk gives a smoother texture with a few added calories. One cup of almond milk has about 45 calories and contains about 2.5 grams of fat.

- Coconut water: Hydrating and subtly sweet, coconut water is perfect for tropical-themed smoothies. It also adds about 45 calories per cup.

2. Add plenty of greens a handful at a time.

The deeper the green, the more nutrient-dense. And don't discard the ribs; they have their own set of interesting nutrients. Remove only the toughest ribs for better blending and flavor.

Limit spinach and Swiss chard in smoothies because they are high in oxalate, which limits calcium absorption.

- Kale is a cruciferous vegetable. It offers anti-cancer, anti-viral (yes, against Covid and the flu), and anti-bacterial benefits.
- Arugula: Choose baby arugula for a milder flavor. Or wild arugula if you prefer a stronger, more peppery, spicy flavor.
- Bok choy: Baby Bok choy, a younger version of the fully grown Bok choy, has a bit more sweetness than mature Bok choy.



3. Pick your fruits: Use 1/2 to 1 cup. Fresh or frozen. Berries, oranges, mangoes, pineapple, peaches, and pomegranate arils add brilliant color and vibrant flavor. Focus on vegetables and keep fruits to a minimum. Keep in mind that this is breakfast, not dessert.

- Berries, like blueberries, strawberries, and raspberries, are high in antioxidants. They also give a vibrant color. Pineapple and mango add a tropical kick.
- Dates: Add only a few. High in fiber, they sweeten naturally. Make sure to remove the pit.

4. Add seeds. These superfoods provide omega-3 fatty acids and other healthy fats to help absorb fat-soluble vitamins. Add one or more kinds but keep the total to 1-2 tablespoons.

- Chia seeds help to thicken the smoothie and provide a tapioca-type consistency.

- Flax seeds contain lignans, which block estrogen to protect against certain cancers. If your blender doesn't grind up the flax seed hulls completely, use flax seed meal.
- Hemp seeds are especially rich in an amino acid called arginine which has particular benefits for blood vessels and heart health.

5. Sneak in unexpected veggies with even more nutrients with these powerhouse additions.

- Carrots: Add a subtle sweetness and bright color.
- Beets: Very vibrant and full of folate and manganese.
- Cucumbers are refreshing and hydrating.
- Cauliflower or broccoli: Frozen has a milder taste than fresh. Add just 2 or 3 florets for a creamy texture.

6. Boost flavor with spices and herbs:

- Cinnamon adds warmth and pairs well with fruit.
- Ginger: Fresh or powdered, it gives a zing and is great for digestion.
- Mint leaves freshen up any smoothie.

It's important to eat foods in their whole form too. So, limit smoothies to one a day. And just because you've had a smoothie, don't skip your daily salad.

Happy blending!

Banana TIP:

We recently learned that an enzyme in bananas destroys flavonoids in other foods. Flavonoids are linked with good health, so we don't want to risk losing them.



Berries are highest in flavonoids and stand to lose the most of these nutrients if combined with bananas in your blender.

The science is complicated, but I've made it easy for you!

RULE OF THUMB: Avoid combining bananas and berries. If you're using a banana, add peaches, mangoes, pineapples, kiwis, etc.

When we eat bananas by themselves, they are perfectly safe and nutritious foods. So don't snub bananas completely.

Layer your Smoothie

Spinning up a smoothie can be tough work for your blender. To speed up blending and ensure the smoothest texture, add your ingredients in this order:



Liquids



Powders/Sweeteners

Foods like cocoa powder and dates



Greens

Things can get stuck here. Se extra blending time can help keep things moving in the blender. Add more liquid if necessary.



Soft ingredients

If you're adding plant-based yogurts or tofu, now's the time.



Fresh fruit



Heavy ingredients

Ice, frozen fruit, nuts, seeds

Green Warrior Smoothie

Here's a fun way to get your super greens into your day. The nutrients in greens are incredibly health-promoting. Use less kale if you're new to green smoothies -- or more if you just feel like going for it!

Ingredients:

- 1 - 1/2 cups water (Start with 1 cup, add more if necessary)
- 1 T ground flax seed
- 2 big handfuls baby spinach
- 1/2 cup frozen cauliflower and/or broccoli (frozen only, don't use fresh, the taste will be too strong)
- 2 or 3 leaves of kale
- 1/3 cup frozen mango
- 1 cup frozen blueberries

Instructions:

Blend well. If you don't have a high-speed blender like a Vitamix, add the liquid, flax, and greens first and blend. Then slowly add the frozen fruit. You may have to start and stop the blender a few times to stir it and to add more water.

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Recipe courtesy of Jenn Taylor



Peaches & Greens Smoothie

Combining peaches and bananas gives you a taste of summer and a burst of natural sweetness that is hard to resist. Use frozen peaches to give your smoothie an extra chill.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup frozen peaches or 2 medium ripe peaches
- 1 frozen banana
- 2 big handfuls of baby spinach
- 1 small handful of Swiss chard
- 1 T ground flax
- 1 to 1 ½ cups water

Instructions:

Add all ingredients into a blender and mix well.



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Recipe courtesy of Jenn Taylor

Microbiome Boost Smoothie

This energizing blend of fruits and (hidden) veggies is the perfect fuel for your microbiome. There are more than 17 grams of fiber in this smoothie to keep your microbes in tip-top shape.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups water
- ½ small zucchini
- 1 cup frozen riced cauliflower/broccoli
- ½ cup frozen pineapple or mango
- 1 cup frozen berries
- T ground flax or hemp seeds
- 2-3 handfuls of mixed super greens or baby spinach

Instructions:

Blend all ingredients in a high speed blender until smooth.

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Recipe courtesy of Jenn Taylor



Berry Blast Smoothie

Almost always, I have a bag of frozen berries kicking around my freezer. This simple recipe lets me incorporate those wayward but brightly-colored, high-antioxidant, delicious minis into a creamy delight.

Ingredients:

- 1 to 1 ½ cups water
- ½ cup frozen pineapple or mango
- 1 cup frozen berries
- 1 T ground flax seed
- 2 handfuls of baby spinach or Swiss chard

Instructions:

Add all ingredients into a blender and mix well.

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Recipe courtesy of Jenn Taylor



Mango Tango Smoothie

Because an enzyme in bananas blocks the body's ability to absorb anti-oxidants, the frozen banana is optional. If you do include the banana, just be sure to eat an extra helping of berries when you're not eating banana.

Ingredients:

- 1 mango, pitted and peeled or 1 cup frozen mango
- 1 cup frozen strawberries
- 1 whole frozen banana, peeled (optional)
- 1.5 cups of water cups of water or coconut water
- 1 T ground flax seed
- 2 big handfuls of baby spinach
- 2-4 leaves of Swiss chard with the stem removed (You could use only baby spinach and skip the chard if you'd prefer)

Instructions:

Add all ingredients into a blender and mix well.

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Recipe courtesy of Jenn Taylor

