

## Food Focus: Fruit

By using fruit to satisfy our taste for sweetness, we can leave behind the use of chemical and refined sweeteners. Fruits are easy to digest, cleansing and cooling and are great for those who are over-stressed and over-heated. Fruits are filled with fiber and liver stimulants, which act as natural, gentle laxatives. Whenever possible, buy fresh, locally grown fruit, this keeps you eating in season. According to this theory, our body functions best when it is closely aligned with the seasons and climates of wherever we are. A great way to see what is "local" and in season is to go to a farmers market. ([www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org) is a website that can help you do that in your area.)

Eating fruit raw in summer months is highly cooling, while baking it in the winter months neutralizes this cooling effect. Fruit in the form of juice is a great choice for cleansing the body, but be aware that juice rapidly raises blood sugar levels, leading to an energy crash soon after. Frozen or juiced fruit can make great summertime cool-down treats. Try frozen grapes, banana-coconut smoothie popsicles or lime juice and fresh mint ice-cubes in iced tea!

Here are a few summer fruits and their health benefits:

**Apricots:** Great for lung conditions and asthma; used to help treat anemia due to their high copper and cobalt content.

**Bananas:** Help to lubricate the intestines, treat ulcers, detoxify the body, and manage sugar cravings; rich in potassium, which helps hypertension.

**Cherries:** Slightly warming in nature; increase overall body energy, remedy arthritis and rheumatism, and are rich in iron, which improves the blood.

**Grapefruits:** Treat poor digestion, increase appetite during pregnancy, alleviate intestinal gas and reduce mucus conditions of the lungs.

**Papayas:** Tone the stomach, act as digestive aid, moisten the lungs and alleviate coughing; contain carpaine, an anti-tumor compound.

**Raspberries:** Benefit the liver and kidneys, cleanse blood of toxins, regulate menstrual cycles, treat anemia and can promote labor at childbirth.

## Featured Recipe Fruit Nut Smoothie

**Prep time:** 5 minutes

**Serves:** 2

**Ingredients:**

1 banana

1 cup soy or rice milk

1 cup berries

1 cup diced melon

1/2 cup almonds

2-4 ice cubes

**Directions:**

1. Mix in blender for 1-2 minutes and serve.

**Optional:**

You can add other ingredients for added nutrition such as a spoon full of bee pollen, coconut oil, flax seed oil, spirulina powder or a scoop of protein powder.

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*Amy Coughlin, a Certified Wellness Coach, educates individuals to make better healthy food and lifestyle choices. By creating awareness and balance, she empowers people to make significant, long-term choices which leads to living an energized and passionate life. Ultimately, her life experiences and education, coupled with her expertise in corporate training and recruitment, has inspired her to coach individuals and corporate groups in wellness education programs.*

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