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The Season of
Grandeur

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SUPERFOODS – MEDICINE OF THE FUTURE

Hippocrates said: ‘Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food’, but this ancient wisdom is discovering even deeper meaning as the world of nutritional science explores new frontiers that could help realise this potential.

By Laura Holland

As the father of modern medicine, it seems most appropriate that we explore the gravitas of Hippocrates’ words within the context of this modern label that has recently propelled select foods to ‘super’ status. With this status comes the most ambitious claim that superfoods are indeed ‘the medicine of the future.’ Could it really be that we discover the root of Hippocrates’ wisdom within these? Many experts, including David Wolfe, the ‘rockstar of the superfood world,’ believe this to be true and with a celebrity following including Oprah Winfrey, Gwyneth Paltrow and Madonna, they are certainly gaining credibility. However, the idea of a superfood remains a subjective concept as there is currently no legal definition. This is reiterated in a report by the British NHS, *Miracle Foods Myths and the Media*, fuelling the confusion surrounding what qualifies as a superfood and leaving the door open to vast interpretations and marketing exploits. This uncertainty ensures that a haze of doubt lingers over their health benefit claims and, in some cases, reduces the concept to nothing more than just the latest diet craze. Despite the ambiguity many high profile doctors like Dr. Perricone and Dr. Oz seem comfortable with this terminology and even promote the idea of certain foods providing ‘the maximum amount of nutrients with minimum calories’ to supply more than just your average shot of nutrition, making them eligible for the superfood category.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman, a USA board certified physician, nutrition researcher and New York Times bestselling author advocates eating like a ‘nutritarian’, incorporating the most nutritious foods for the body into your diet and including superfoods as a means to reverse disease, lower cholesterol and even prevent cancer. However, studying the effects of a single food on our health is notoriously difficult and ‘results are often over stated’ according to the same NHS report, resulting in a bombardment of information and a new superfood every week that only serves to undermine the concept further.

Foods like blueberries, spinach, beetroot, almonds and many more are given superfood status in the media, however, most nutritionists would agree that whilst there may be no ‘legal’ definition of a superfood these certainly do not come close to the inner circle of what is truly meant by a superfood.

For nutrition experts what we really mean by a superfood is a nutrient profile that is exceptionally vast, providing the body with doses of micro and macro nutrients that are capable of fighting illness, allowing the body’s natural process of healing, and restoring harmony to one’s own state of being.

Spirulina is an excellent example. A study by Antenna Nutrition presented at the World Nutrition Congress suggested that a daily dose of just one to three grams of spirulina over a period of four to six weeks could be sufficient to cure children of five years or younger of mild and moderate malnutrition.



Image courtesy of John Smith/Corbis

Like spirulina, true superfoods are plant based, often having been cultivated for thousands of years, shrouded in mystery and ancient medicinal practice with high vibrational energy capable of supporting life, in its highest sense, on a physical, emotional and spiritual level as discussed at length by David Wolfe.

These foods, when eaten intelligently for your body, could very easily replace our usual vitamin and mineral supplements, providing a high level of nutrients but in real food form rather than a pill. This is certainly a movement back to our roots; eating our food and our medicine, rather than taking it. With this in mind there is an elite group that are considered the real superfoods;

- **GOJI BERRIES** - The secret of longevity with a very high antioxidant content, a complete protein source with amino acids and polysaccharides.
- **CACAO** - The food of the gods and ‘number one in the world for antioxidants of any fruit or nut’ according to David Wolfe with an incredible mineral profile including magnesium and powerful blood sugar and weight management properties.
- **COCONUT** - The symbol of paradise supporting thyroid health and metabolism whilst hydrating our tissues and energizing the immune system.
- **MACA** - The root of fertility with powerful hormonal benefits supporting the thyroid, pituitary and hypothalamus glands increasing vitality and fertility whilst allowing the body to deal with stress more effectively.
- **BLUE GREEN ALGAE AND SPIRULINA** - The Protein Queens brimming with amino acids and antioxidants, the incredible mineral content provides powerful alkalising properties restoring the body’s crucial Ph balance.
- **MARINE PHYTOPLANKTON** - The basis of the world’s food chain containing ATP, the energy currency of your body providing instant energy that in David Wolfe’s words is ‘so profound’ as we feel awake and alert but without the caffeine like stimulation that weakens immunity.
- **ALOE VERA** - Egyptian Secret of Immortality, it protects the immune system, feeds the skin, cools the body and soothes the intestines.
- **BEE POLLEN, ROYAL JELLY AND HONEY** - The fountain of youth and beauty is the most complete food in the world, providing a full spectrum of protein and no less than 50 to 60 nutrients.
- **ACAI BERRIES AND MAQUI BERRIES** - Antioxidant light workers capable of fighting 80% of cancers due to their incredible antioxidant qualities whilst also being high in omega three according to recent studies.
- **CHIA SEEDS** - The source of strength, these tiny seeds are incredibly high in omega three, fibre, protein and B vitamins, they are endurance boosting metabolism strengthening super seeds.

Whilst this list can never be complete due to the inconclusive nature of the definition of a superfood, these foods do represent an awe inspiring array of nutrients and vital life force energy and in many cases the healing benefits embedded in their ancient wisdom and medicinal practice has been repeatedly confirmed by western studies and analysis. When dealing with such potent nutrition it is important to remember that what may be your vitamin maybe another’s poison and their effects within the body are not to be underestimated.

Care is certainly required when deciding to include some of them into your diet and it’s essential to do so in a conscious manner, listening to your body and beginning with smaller quantities.

Many of these superfoods can be found in raw powder form making them very easy to incorporate into your daily routine and ideal for adding to juices and smoothies. The list of reported health benefits is celebrated by many and includes weight loss, detoxification, stress reduction, mood enhancement, strengthened immunity, Ph balancing, skin healing, anti ageing, anti inflammatory and cancer fighting, to name a few. Whilst research is still ongoing there is certainly food for thought within the ancient wisdom of true superfoods and healthy potential for being our medicine of the future.