

Rethinking What's 'Edible'

You may be tossing out the best parts of some very healthy foods and missing out on significant nutrients. Rethink how to prepare these six superfoods.

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When most people think of **healthy foods**, they think of choices like colorful kiwi fruit and pineapple, perfectly juicy oranges, and bright, fresh broccoli and squash. Of course, missing from that picture are the parts of those superfoods that you may often discard, such as the skin of the kiwi and the hard core of the pineapple. But before you toss out these food parts, dietitians say, it's time to reconsider what you're cutting away. Many of these pared-off parts of fruits and veggies are positively brimming with antioxidants, and eating them can boost your health.

Making Quick Work of Kiwis



Kiwi fruit, with its soft, green texture, is delicious, sweet, and tangy. That hairy brown skin, however, not so much. But Jackie Newgent, RD, author of the *Big Green Cookbook* and instructor at the Institute of Culinary Education, suggests you think twice before throwing out the skin of this healthy food. "Eating skin-on kiwi makes the fruit even more nutrient-dense," she says. "Eating the skin can triple the fiber intake when compared to eating just the flesh. Plus, if you don't peel a kiwi, it'll help the fruit better retain its vitamin C richness. I enjoy dicing up a kiwi with the skin and tossing it into a mixed fruit salad — the kiwi actually holds up better while the skin becomes deliciously moistened by juices from other fruits." If you do leave the skin on kiwis or other superfood fruits, Newgent recommends buying organic versions. "That will help

keep pesticide residues out of your **diet**," she says. "Plan to still scrub the produce well."

Stalking Broccoli's Goodness



The stalks of the superfood broccoli are just as packed with **antioxidants**, fiber, and taste as the florets, yet the stalks of this healthy food often end up going to waste. “My biggest issue with broccoli preparation is that so often we waste most of the stalks,” says Newgent. “For appeal, I thinly slice much of the broccoli stalk on the bias and use it in stirfries.” Broccoli also makes a great recipe extender for any diet. “I slice a large portion of the stalk lengthwise, then into half-moon pieces crosswise, for preparations like poultry stews,” adds Newgent.

The Skinny on Acorn Squash



When preparing squash, most people would opt to simply eat the flesh of this superfood. Newgent says that means missing out on vital antioxidants: Acorn squash skin provides an array of phytonutrient benefits plus **fiber**. “Keep it on,” she advises. “My favorite way to prepare acorn squash is to roast halves with their skin and eat the skin with the flesh. It adds texture, color, and overall meal appeal. You can even prepare it quickly in the **microwave**.” To add extra flavor to your diet, Newgent suggests dressing the squash with a tiny pat of butter, a drizzle of maple syrup, and a pinch of sea salt.

Pineapple's Core of the Matter



The core of the pineapple is a little harder and obviously not as appealing as the fleshy part of the fruit. But it's in your interest to eat a little bit of the harder core of this healthy food, says Roschelle Heuberger, PhD, RD, associate professor of foods and nutrition at Central Michigan University. "Pineapple cores have nutrients, as does the pineapple flesh," she says. "Eating it **raw** is really the best way from a nutritional standpoint. It is just a little harder and less sweet than the rest."

Rethinking Orange Rind



Most people see the rinds of citrus fruit as the layer between us and the good stuff of these healthy foods. Heuberger notes that these rinds are positively packed with unique antioxidants. "The terpenes that are contained in the rinds of lemons and oranges have known 'cytotoxic' [cell-killing] properties and may have an anti-inflammatory effect," she says. Adding rinds to your diet may offer some **protection against cancerous cells** and decrease the aging effects of free radicals. Zest flavors are pronounced, so you need to balance them with other flavors in recipes. "Zesting the rind into strong-flavored dishes or **dressings** masks the bitterness and provides the strong aroma associated with the oils," says Heuberger. Try adding bits to homemade cranberry sauce and vinaigrette-based dressings.

Potato Skin Game



The ubiquitous potato could be considered much more of a healthy food and less of a diet buster if you leave the skin on, suggests Newgent. “More of the potato nutrients, like vitamin C and **potassium**, are preserved when potatoes are cooked and eaten with the skin on,” she says. “Plus, the skins provide significant fiber.” Americans are only getting about half of the fiber needed daily in their diet, so go for the skin. “Nearly any recipe that calls for a peeled potato can be made with a peel-on potato, so experiment and enjoy the extra chewing sensation,” she adds.

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