



by [Linda Barsi](#)

Follow on:



272



SHARE IT



PIN IT



13 Foods These Nutritionists Wished They'd Started Eating Earlier

Tue 11 Nov, 2014



Photo Credits: [Thinkstock Images](#)

As kids, we tend to eat boring foods. And that's fine! Because eventually we'll start to eat more interesting, diverse, and, yes, nutritious foods. But, sadly, sometimes we miss a gem of a health food in our teens or twenties and only come to find we love it years later.

For me that food was lentils. I am *obsessed* with lentils, but I didn't start eating them until earlier this year. Now they're my go-to winter comfort food.

So I asked some of our nutritionist friends what that missed healthy food gem was for them. Some of their answers might surprise you (cough, #9, cough).

1. Pistachios

"I'm a registered dietitian, and here's my 2 cents: I wish I'd started earlier getting my snack on with pistachios. Growing up, they were always a 'dad food.' I was wrong. They're actually great for all ages and can be kid-friendly, too, since the shells keep little hands busy, making them a perfect 'activity food,' getting kids engaged with healthy foods. Studies show that getting kids actively involved with prepping healthy foods keeps them hungry for more!

As an adult, and as a dietitian, I love pistachios because **they are the skinny nut** — offering 49 nuts per serving while being one of the lowest fat, lowest calorie nuts. With that big serving size, I hardly ever have 49 in one sitting, so I'm satisfied at snack time with fewer calories. I also love that they're the only colorful nut — the green kernels and purple skin come from antioxidants."

— **Maggie Moon**, Registered Dietitian, maggiemoon.com, also [on Twitter](#)

2. Healthy Fats

"When I studied nutrition, it was during the 'low-fat era,' when the health community had inappropriately counseled against eating fat. It was thought that fat in the diet was the root of health concerns. Now we know that it's the type of fat that makes a difference. **The best kind of fat is unsaturated, such as monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats.** These are found widely in plant fats, such as nuts, olives, seeds, avocado. We used to counsel people to avoid these foods! Now we know that study after study finds health benefits for eating moderate amounts of healthy fats. Plus, research shows that people who include them regularly in their diet do not tend to gain weight! In addition, these healthy fats help you absorb important nutrients. Best of all, they add so much delicious flavor to the diet."

— **Sharon Palmer**, RDN, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, and author of [Plant-Powered for Life](#)

3. Beets Smoothie

"Beets! If I could revisit my childhood, I would ask my parents to add beets on my plate or salads instead of asking for more collards, sweet potatoes or carrots, I would be a happy camper! I'm not saying these vegetables are not good for you, [...] but beets, oh beets, are so vibrant in color and are extremely good for you. **Beets are packed with unique pigment antioxidants called beta-cyanins, which have shown to reduce cancer.** Beets are heart-healthy with a fair amount of folate, which helps keep harmful homocysteine levels down. Beets are also perfect for weight-control and full of potassium for controlling blood pressure. One of my favorite drinks now is a beet smoothie. [Recipe here.](#)

One more thing, the beets greens are also delicious and healthy, so don't throw them away."

— **Charmaine Jones**, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, living in the District of Columbia Metropolitan Area, foodjonezi.com

4. Avocados

"As a child, my mother told me that avocados were something only 'hippies' ate. Thank goodness I was rebellious and started eating them! **Hass avocados are one of the most unique fruits on the planet with lots of potassium**, a just-right amount of good-for-you fat, and plenty of health promoting antioxidants, including lutein and lycopene. But the best part to me, they're absolutely delicious!"

— **Jackie Newgent**, RDN, culinary nutritionist and author of *The With or Without Meat Cookbook*, jackienewgent.com

5. Golden Milk



worldlifestyle.com

"I wish I started drinking 'golden milk' early! It is unsweetened cashew milk with turmeric (1 tsp), stevia or honey and sprinkle some nutmeg. **It tastes awesome, is very filling and the turmeric is anti-inflammatory**, antioxidant and research indicates it has anti-cancer properties. In addition, it regulates metabolism and weight management."

— **Nancy Guberti**, Biomedical Nutritionist, Functional Medicine Specialist, MS, CN, nancyguberti.com, also [on Twitter](#), [Pinterest](#), and [Facebook](#)

6. Egg Yolks

"I think we all know that the protein in the whites is incredibly well digested and good for you. So I found myself ordering egg whites always sans the yolk. However, new research suggests in fact that the cholesterol in the yolk is not nearly as bad as we previously believed it to be and helps promote the production of hormones that help the body maintain lean muscle.

More importantly, the yolk is one of the most nutrient dense foods out there – it's nutrition facts read like the label of a vitamin, and as we all know getting your nutrients from a whole food source versus a vitamin is always preferable to the extent possible."

— **Colin M. Darretta** of WellPath Solutions, GoWellPath.com. You can email him at Colin@gowellpath.com

7. Roasted Brussels Sprouts

"I hated Brussels sprouts as a kid so much I tried to feed them to my dog under the table. Our lab, who ate everything, spit out my Brussels sprouts! It was the one vegetable I never ate until my husband ordered them with bacon at a restaurant. They were amazing. I learned to roast them, and now I adore them. I never knew how good they could be! **They are a super healthy cruciferous vegetable** — excellent source of vitamin C and K and chock full of phytochemicals that may offer protection against cancer."

— **Anne London**, M.S. R.D. Registered Dietitian/ Nutritionist, Owner of Petite Nutrition, www.petitenutrition.com

8. Vega Protein Powders

"I wish I found Vega protein powders earlier. Many years ago I used to eat a lot of processed soy proteins, because I gave up meat 14 years ago. Then I realized it's not good. **Now I make Vega smoothies for breakfast so I'm able to start my day with a plant-based protein packed meal.**"

— **Jennifer Cassetta**, CN, CPT, HHC, jennifercassetta.com, on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#)

9. Red Meat and Butter

"**This goes against standard medicine, but it healed me: quality, local red meat and organic butter.** Growing up, my family followed the dieticians and cut back of red meat and butter. Once

on my own, I took it a step farther and really ate a 'heart healthy' diet. Then, I found out it was killing me and my cholesterol was 333.

When I made the switch to red meat and butter, quality fats and avoid grains, my cholesterol dropped to 187, I lose over 60lbs, and my energy came back full force. And I have maintained the weight loss and healthy numbers for a decade.

I realized my metabolism required high quality proteins, lots of healthy fats, and I was hurting myself eating grains. We need to find what works for our bodies, not just listen to the outdated advice that doesn't listen to you."

— **Christina Major**, Holistic Nutritionist, Herbalist, Nutrition and Lifestyle Coach, professional health and nutrition speaker The Health Recovery Expert of CrystalHolisticHealth.com

10. Broccoli

"I never liked broccoli when I was younger... maybe because it was green, maybe because I knew it was 'healthy,' maybe because I was a picky eater. Now, I love not only the taste and crunch of broccoli, but love that its fiber fills me up and **antioxidants like glucoraphanin and sulforaphane have detoxification, anti-cancer, and cardio-protective properties.**"

— **Tori Holthaus**, MS, RDN, LD, [YES! Nutrition, LLC](http://YES!Nutrition,LLC), also [on Twitter](#)

11. Cultured Foods

"I wish that I had started eating cultured foods earlier (i.e. foods that are fermented and thus contain probiotics). Probiotics are such an important part of our diet, and cultured foods (like yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut, kimchi) have been dietary staples of our ancestors for thousands of years. However, it wasn't until recently that I 'rediscovered' these foods and started to incorporate them on a daily basis, and encourage my patients to do the same. Kefir is a great example of a cultured dairy product that I had neglected in my early years in favor of yogurt, but kefir is a superfood in my book — **more probiotics than yogurt, and very little lactose making it a digestively friendly go-to food.**"

— **Danielle Capalino**, M.S.P.H. Registered Dietitian, affiliated with [New York Gastroenterology Associates](http://NewYorkGastroenterologyAssociates). She is also [on Twitter](#).

12. Edamame

"My first experience with edamame was at a sushi restaurant. The edamame came steamed in pods and some dip them in soy sauce before eating. I really enjoyed the bean, and when I saw I could buy them shelled and frozen at the grocery store, I purchased some. **I knew edamame was healthy but after reading about the versatility of the bean, they became part of my regular diet.** I use edamame in soups and salads, and even make a delicious edamame hummus that many guests really enjoy."

— **Rene Ficek**, Registered Dietitian, Lead Nutrition Expert at [Seattle Sutton's Healthy Eating](#)

13. Cooked Vegetables

"I am a registered dietitian and wish I had started eating cooked vegetables earlier, partially to save my mom some frustration, but mostly because **they are delicious and have amazing antioxidants.** I avoided eating any cooked vegetables my entire childhood because my dad said they were 'mushy.' My mom still cooked carrots, broccoli, cauliflower and asparagus, but my dad never ate them so neither would I. My mom still tells the story of how I came home from a friend's house asking why we never had cooked carrots at our house, because I had tried them over there and they were delicious! Now I know that this is classic behavior modeling. I eventually tried cooked broccoli when I was in college, and later asparagus and cauliflower, too. Turns out I like all of the above."

— **Jessica Setnick**, Registered Dietitian at [UnderstandingNutrition.com](#), author of [The Eating Disorders Clinical Pocket Guide](#)

<http://www.worldlifestyle.com/health-fitness/the-health-food-these-13-nutritionists-wished-they-d-started-eating-earlier>