



boost antioxidants with herbs

Adding a small amount of herbs—or herb paste—when making a salad or red pasta sauce can more than double the antioxidant value of your meal. In fact, the antioxidant level in a modest serving of fresh or dried herbs (1–10 grams) is similar to that in a serving of most vegetables (75 grams).

supercharged salads

Research shows that the antioxidant value of a simple salad of lettuce, cucumber, and tomato could be significantly increased by adding a dressing rich in herbs. The ORAC value (Oxygen Radical Absorbance Capacity) is a measure of the antioxidant power in foods. The researchers found that the ORAC value of foods is nearly tripled when a Greek-style lemon and olive oil dressing also includes garlic, rosemary, oregano, and mint. Similarly, the ORAC value more than doubled if garlic, basil, parsley, and oregano were added to create an Italian-flavored dressing.

A 2005 study found that marjoram or lemon balm increased the antioxidant value of a salad by 200 percent. Herbs can indeed add powerful antioxidants to a meal!

boost pasta sauces

But the benefits don't end with salads. A recent Australian study showed that herbs can boost the antioxidant value of a plain tomato

and olive oil pasta sauce by 50–200 percent, depending on whether one adds garlic, ginger, basil, or oregano, with the latter providing the strongest result. While the effect of each herb was measured individually, researchers believe that, because of the way phytonutrients network, even more antioxidant power is gained by mixing herbs and plant foods together.

5 ways to use more herbs

1. Sprinkle dried oregano on a slice of toast drizzled with olive oil.
2. Bake potatoes with crushed rosemary, or pumpkin with sage leaves.
3. Add dried herbs, such as thyme or dill when cooking lentil, barley, or vegetable soups.
4. Create a salsa with chopped tomatoes, red onions, cilantro, basil, and avocado.
5. Add sliced ginger to a broth with soba noodles, shiitake mushrooms, bean sprouts, and spring onions.

Nutritionist Sue Radd is the award-winning author of *The Breakfast Book* and coauthor of *Eat To Live*, internationally acclaimed for showing how savvy eating can combat cancer and heart disease and improve well-being. See the latest at <http://www.sueradd.com>.