

# Seeking Balance

## Herbs and Food for Health

*'Let Food be thy medicine and let medicine be thy food'  
Attributed to Hippocrates ca. 460BCE to ca. 370BCE*



Over 200 years ago, the Greek physician Hippocrates, widely regarded as the father of medicine, developed a gentle health regime of rest, good diet, fresh air and cleanliness. This regime was based on the observation that the body can heal itself when given the appropriate nutrition and environment to so.

Today, his approach seems remarkably contemporary. Scientific research increasingly supports the notion that natural, unprocessed foods can improve well-being, reduce the likelihood of developing certain health problems, and speed our recovery when we are ill.

This booklet describes some major food-groups and their importance to health. It also includes information on foods which come under the category of medicinal herbs. We have included some tasty recipes and hope that you are encouraged to try foods that might be new to you, and look at more common fare with renewed interest.

## Table of Contents

<b>Green Leafy Vegetables</b>	2
<b>Root Vegetables</b>	4
<b>Alliums</b>	5
<b>Blue, Red and Purple fruits</b>	6
<b>Grains</b>	7
<b>Nuts and Seeds</b>	8
<b>Culinary Herbs and Spices</b>	10
<b>Nutritional Mushrooms</b>	11
<b>Phytoestrogens</b>	12
<b>Seaweed</b>	14
<b>Bibliography</b>	15



## Green Leafy Vegetables

Most of us know that we need to eat a minimum of 5 portions of fruit and vegetables daily. Green vegetables have particular health benefits: they are rich in chlorophyll which helps to neutralize toxins in the intestines, and those from the cabbage family such as broccoli, brussel sprouts and cabbage contain substances which help to significantly reduce our risk of certain cancers.

Greens provide essential alkaline minerals such as **calcium** and **magnesium** that are often found in insufficient quantities in fruit, nuts and seeds. These two minerals work synergistically with the optimum ratio being 2:1 for good absorption. In dairy they are found in a ratio of about 12:1 which makes them less easily absorbed by the body. The ratio in green leafy vegetables is much better making them a better choice. If we consume too much calcium, without sufficient magnesium, the excess calcium is not utilized correctly and may actually become toxic, causing painful conditions in the body. Many researchers and nutritionists now believe magnesium is more important than calcium in order to maintain healthy bones

Watercress is often referred to as a super food as it contains more than 15 minerals. The substance which gives watercress its peppery taste increases the body's resistance to certain cancer-forming agents. Spinach is particularly rich in lutein which helps protect your eyesight.

Nettles have been used as a food and medicine for thousands of years. They are rich in minerals (much richer in iron than spinach) and help eliminate uric acid from the body – good for people who suffer from gout. Nettle root is now used by herbalists to help reduce/control benign prostate enlargement. Try this tasty soup – you will be very surprised at how good it is, but wear gloves when collecting the nettles, and only collect the young spring tops. You can use the same basic recipe to make spinach or watercress soup.

### ***Recipe: Velvety Nettle Soup***

*1 tablespoon olive oil*

*1 onion peeled and chopped*

*450g of potatoes, peeled and diced*

*225g of tender nettles*

*Freshly grated nutmeg*

*Single cream (optional)*

*Heat the oil in a large saucepan, then put in the onion and potatoes. Stir, then cover and cook over gentle heat for a further 5 minutes, stirring from time to time. Add the nettles, cover and cook for a further 5 minutes, then pour in 1 liter of water (or vegetable stock), bring to the boil, simmer for about 20 minutes until the vegetables are cooked. Liquidize, season to taste and add the cream if using.*

Other greens to add to your diet are dandelion leaves, also high in minerals, especially potassium, zinc, iron, copper and vitamin A and C. Traditionally, the tender spring-time leaves are added to salads to cleanse and stimulate the digestive system. The bitterness of the leaves stimulates the flow of bile through the liver. The common name of 'wet the bed' reflects the fact that dandelion leaves do have a mild diuretic effect.

Finally, a vegetable with a long use as both a food and medicine is the globe artichoke. It supports the liver and gall bladder, containing similar liver protective constituents to milk thistle, can improve constipation and may help reduce high blood sugar levels. Many people are put off by this unfamiliar Mediterranean vegetable, but it is very delicious when simply boiled for about 40 minutes.

To prepare, cut the stalks and tough leaves off so that only the tender leaf bases remain and carefully scrape out the hairy choke. Baby artichokes can be halved or quartered and cooked in olive oil. Serve the warm artichokes with a little melted butter, or serve cold with a vinaigrette dressing.

Aim to eat at least one portion of greens daily. Nutritional Therapists often recommend juicing to their clients as they are easily assimilated by the body and gentle on the digestive system. They are an excellent way of getting your greens giving you a great vitamin and mineral boost!

### **Recipe: Green Juice**

*2 carrots  
1/2 med beetroot  
1-2 cups kale  
1 handful parsley  
1 handful spinach  
4-5 celery ribs  
1/2 lemon*

*Juice all ingredients except lemon. Mix well. Add lemon juice if desired.*

### ***Did you know...***

***Recent research has found that over 65's who eat 3 portions of vegetables per day, reduce the decline in their cognitive abilities by up to 40%, compared to those that eat almost no vegetables. Fruit does not offer the same protection.***

## Root Vegetables

Roots such as potatoes, carrots, turnips and parsnips are a good source of carbohydrate. Sweet potatoes are particularly recommended by Nutritional Therapists as they are high in antioxidants and are a good slow releasing form of carbohydrate important for keeping blood sugar levels stable. The best way to conserve their nutrient content is by baking or steaming.

Try leaving the washed potato skins on when boiling potatoes, mashing them or even when making chips – much of the nutrient content lies under the skin and is lost when these vegetables are peeled. Doing this also significantly increases the fibre content of the root and slows down the rate of sugar release.

There are some rather neglected root vegetables with lots of health-giving properties. Beetroot for instance is a cheap, deliciously sweet vegetable when simply boiled and allowed to cool. It can also be juiced raw and can be particularly helpful to improve anaemia and fatigue or used as an aid in convalescence. Nutritional Therapists value beetroot as a blood tonic and for its liver protective qualities and it is another rich source of iron.

### **Recipe:**

*Try cold, cooked beetroot slices layered with goats cheese. Top with walnuts, and drizzle over a little olive oil for a tasty and nutritious snack.*

Fennel root is another neglected but delicious vegetable, sometimes hard to get hold of. Like the seeds, it can help settle the digestion and is wonderful simply braised with other vegetables or roasted with peppers, garlic, onions and courgette. Toss the vegetables in olive oil first. Ancient herbalists praised it for its ability to aid weight-loss, although there has been no modern research to support this.

Carrots are one of the richest source of beta carotene which is a powerful antioxidant helping to protect us from those damaging free radicals. The more intense the colour of the vegetable the more phytonutrients it will contain so those bright orange carrots will be full of antioxidants.

**A glass of carrot juice contains about 45,000 IU of vitamin A. That's got to be good for something!**

## Alliums

A group of root vegetables that are in a category of their own are the alliums, or the onion family which includes onions, leeks, garlic, and chives. They contain sulphur compounds which are helpful for fighting infections. Onion contains a substance called quercetin that acts like a natural anti-histamine.

Garlic is a potent natural antibiotic to which the body does not develop resistance over time. Valued and used for at least 5,000 years by every culture, its antiseptic, antibiotic and anti fungal actions are well known - perfectly preserved garlic bulbs were even found in Tutankhamen's tomb. The Ancient Romans used it to keep their troops in shape, and it was applied to wounds in the First World War, before the advent of antibiotics.

So, what is it about garlic that makes it so valuable to our health? When cloves are chewed, crushed or cut, they release a sulphur-bearing compound called allicin - the chemical that gives garlic its pungent taste and smell. And it's the allicin that scientists have discovered is the magic ingredient thought to be responsible for garlic's therapeutic qualities.

Nutritional Therapists and Herbalists recommend it for respiratory and gut infections, to keep the blood thin and to help lower cholesterol. One trick is to add crushed garlic to casseroles and soups etc. at the end of cooking so that the beneficial properties are not lost - it is the pungent constituents of garlic that are medicinal.

### ***Recipe: Brown Onion Soup***

*A delicious, warming soup for cold weather and combating colds and chills.*

*2 tablespoons of olive oil (or butter)*

*1kg onions, peeled and thinly sliced*

*900ml water or stock (beef or vegetable are best)*

*2 cloves of garlic, crushed*

*lemon juice*

*seasoning to taste*

*chopped parsley or chives*

*Heat the oil in a large heavy based saucepan, then fry the onions gently for 30 mins until soft and deep golden colour, but don't let them burn. Add the stock or water and a few drops of lemon juice. Bring the soup to the boil and let it simmer for 10 minutes. Season to taste, sprinkle over the chopped parsley or chives and serve.*

Aim to eat at least one portion daily from the onion family, raw if possible.

## **Blue, Red and Purple fruits**

All fruits are beneficial, but there is particular interest currently in blue/red/purple fruits and berries such as red grapes, bilberries, blackcurrants, strawberries, pomegranates, cranberries, cherries, raspberries etc. They all contain high levels of flavonoids - anti-oxidant substances which help the body to repair itself and slow-down the development of degenerative conditions such as hardening and narrowing of the arteries and wear and tear in the joints. They are also high in vitamin C.

Cherries are renowned for their cleansing properties. They are particularly useful when eaten regularly for rheumatism and gout. They can also have a mild laxative effect. In ancient times, they were believed to have a rejuvenating effect on the whole body.

### ***Recipe: Black Cherry and Cinnamon Compote***

*750g black cherries, halved and stoned*

*A piece of cinnamon stick*

*Juice and grated rind of half a well scrubbed unwaxed orange*

*4 tablespoons of apple juice concentrate*

*Put all the ingredients into a heavy based saucepan and cook gently for about 5 minutes, until the cherries are soft and the liquid syrupy. Serve hot or cold, with thick yoghurt if desired.*

Bilberry jam was eaten by first world war pilots to aid their night-time vision. Research is now showing that bilberries can help reduce the development of age-related macular degeneration and reduce inflammation in the gut. Most of us now know that cranberries help prevent cystitis and blueberries, strawberries and raspberries are showing anti-cancer properties in laboratory research.

An abundant fruit is the elderberry, which herbalists use for viral coughs and colds. They can be made into a delicious syrup or simply frozen when in season and defrosted and eaten as required. Hawthorn berries are not terribly palatable eaten raw but can be made into a tea. They are used traditionally to support the cardio-vascular system.

Aim for one portion of berry fruits daily, in addition to other fruits. They are available in frozen form from most supermarkets all year round.

***Recipe:*** *For a healthy breakfast or desert, try a small bowl of mixed berry fruits, live yoghurt, with sunflower, sesame and pumpkin seeds sprinkled on top and honey to taste.*

## Grains

Wholegrains are very nutritious and a good source of fibre in the diet. However, we have become increasingly dependent on wheat, neglecting other grains that can be very beneficial. Spelt, for example, is often tolerated better than standard wheat, and grains such as millet, quinoa and buckwheat may be gentler on the digestive system.

Oats are renowned for 'feeding' the nervous system – they contain magnesium and B vitamins, vital nutrients for dealing with stress. Buckwheat, not a true cereal but related to the sorrels and docks, is rich in molybdenum, a mineral needed by the liver for detoxification work. Rye wholegrain is rich in B vitamins, magnesium, iron and zinc.

Barley, a traditional remedy for soothing the urinary tract in the form of barley water, can be added to stews and casseroles and may be cooked with rice. Millet is a very ancient and gentle grain, easy on the digestion and gluten-free. It is a rich source of minerals and vitamins and is high in silica needed for strong bones and teeth. It has a reputation for normalising the bowels and improving the condition of hair and nails.

### ***Recipe: Multicolour Millet Salad***

*225g millet  
1 large carrot, scrubbed and diced  
4 tomatoes, sliced  
5cm piece of cucumber sliced  
1 red pepper, deseeded and chopped  
1 avocado, peeled and sliced  
fresh basil leaves, torn or roughly chopped  
Juice of 1 lemon  
2-4 tablespoons of olive oil  
Seasoning to taste*

*Put the millet in a dry pan and stir over the heat for a minute or so until it smells toasted and the grains begin to pop. Standing well back, pour in 400ml of water. Allow the mixture to come up to the boil. Then cover and cook over a gentle heat for about 20 minutes until the millet is tender and the water absorbed. Allow to cool, then add all the remaining ingredients, forking them gently through the millet.*

We need to eat at least one portion of whole grains daily.

## Nuts and Seeds

Many people shy away from nuts and seeds because of the fat content, but they are high in minerals and vitamins and contain oils - essential fatty acids – that are vital to our neurological development as babies and children, our cardiovascular health, our joints, and such foods may actually help regulate our weight.

Flax (or linseeds) and hemp seeds are an excellent source of omega 3, 6 and 9 fatty acids, as well as fibre, minerals and some B vitamins. Indeed, Mahatma Gandhi said “Wherever flax seeds become a regular food item among the people, there will be better health”. Flax seeds can improve the skin, hair and nails, help lower blood pressure, and prevent arthritis and cancers.

Omega 3 oils and lignans (the fibre found in flax and hemp seeds) may help prevent heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, autoimmune and inflammatory disorders, and neurological conditions. Soak 1-2 tsp of whole flax-seeds in water overnight and take the next morning with a large glass of water to improve improve bowel movement. Take crushed seeds or good quality cold-pressed oil for the essential fatty acids. A tea of flaxseeds can be made with honey and lemon juice to alleviate coughs and sore throats.

Sesame seeds are a rich source of calcium; pumpkin seeds are high in zinc and sometimes recommended for prostate problems in men. The walnut tree is a medicine chest in its own right, the bark, leaves oil and husks as well as the nuts themselves having been used for food and medicine for thousands of years. Walnuts contain an abundance of vitamins and minerals and the oil is good for dry, scaly skin, useful in massage oils.

### ***Recipe: Walnut stuffing for vegetables***

*Enough to stuff 2 medium sized courgettes*

*1 tablespoon olive oil*

*1 onion peeled and chopped*

*1 clove garlic, peeled and crushed*

*50g of walnuts*

*1 tomato, skinned, deseeded and chopped*

*seasoning to taste*

*Heat the oil in a pan and saute the onion and garlic for 10 minutes, until the onion is soft. If the vegetable you are stuffing has had some edible part removed to make room for the stuffing e.g. courgettes or aubergines, then chop this up and add to the onion and garlic after 5 minutes, then cover and continue to cook for another 5 minutes. Either chop the walnuts finely by hand and mix everything together or put the onions and garlic in a food processor with the walnuts and any other ingredient and whizz to a chunky puree. Season to taste with salt and pepper.*

Almonds are another great source of minerals and vitamins, containing high levels of potassium phosphate ('brain food'), calcium phosphate ('bone food') and magnesium phosphate ('flesh food'). They are therefore very valuable at times of rapid growth and raised activity, during convalescence and in old age. They have a traditional reputation for strengthening the nervous system, improving the memory, building up strength and increasing sexual vigour! The oil of sweet almonds makes an excellent massage oil, toning and rejuvenating dry skin. Almonds are also a very versatile cooking ingredient for savoury and sweet dishes.

### ***Recipe: Almond milk and cream***

*A milk/cream can be made from almonds which is an excellent substitute for cow's milk or for convalescence purposes. 50 g of whole almonds are covered with 200-300ml of water in a pan. Bring to the boil and boil for 1 minute. Remove from the heat and allow to cool, then pop the almonds out of their skins. Put the almonds and the water through a liquidizer and whizz until smooth. To make the cream use 40g of nuts to 150mls water Add a small piece of vanilla pod or a few drops of real vanilla essence to the nuts before liquidizing. Sweeten with a dash of honey if needed .*

Brazil nuts are an excellent source of selenium - a trace element that is at very low levels in the soil in the UK. Selenium aids DNA repair, helps prevent cancer, is important for immune system functioning and thyroid hormone activation.

Other important sources of beneficial essential fatty acids are avocados and oily fish. We are recommended to eat 2-3 portions of oily fish per week, and a daily portion of nuts and seeds.

Sprouted Seeds are looked upon by Nutritional Therapists as being one of the most important foods for giving you energy. Alfalfa seeds can be bought inexpensively at the health food store, soaked in a jar overnight and then drained and rinsed daily until they sprout chlorophyll rich shoots five or six days later. They contain vitamins A, B complex, C, E and K as well as calcium, magnesium, potassium, iron, selenium and zinc all ready and available for your body to absorb.

In addition to alfalfa there are dozens of seeds you can sprout, including various forms of whole beans and peas and lentils (not split) all of which have different food values. The sprouting increases the food value by a colossal amount and can help digest anything up to 75% of the food within which it finds itself, without any help at all from the body's enzymes. Nature provides the perfect food for the newly developing and incredibly fast growing plant, as soon as it sprouts and we can benefit from this by eating them at their best.

There is a wonderfully inexpensive book called '*The Sprouters Handbook*' by Edward Cairney which is easy to read and gives you an A-Z of sprouts and how to grow them. It is very easy indeed.

## Culinary Herbs and Spices

Many culinary herbs and spices when taken in high doses can exert a medicinally therapeutic effect. There are too many to go into detail here, but of particular note are ginger, cinnamon, turmeric, capsicum, thyme and parsley. Ginger is well-known as a warming circulatory stimulant and as a remedy for nausea both in travel sickness and pregnancy. It can also aid digestion and has anti-inflammatory properties. Ginger can be taken fresh or dried. It is excellent added freshly grated to fruit as salads – it tastes particularly good with melon, grape and mango. A small peeled piece can also be added to juiced apple and carrot for a delicious juice drink.

Turmeric is a major culinary spice in the East and one of the key medicinal remedies in Ayurvedic medicine. The yellow colour, mainly curcumin, has anti-inflammatory properties and makes the plant of benefit to arthritis sufferers. More evidence is accumulating that using even modest amounts of turmeric in cooking on a regular basis may be highly beneficial to health. Cinnamon is a warming, antiseptic, anti-fungal and antispasmodic herb which can ease digestive problems, alleviate menstrual cramps and help lower blood pressure. It is a warming spice to take for feverish conditions. Cinnamon is used to flavour many savoury and sweet dishes. Add a piece of quill to rice or stewed fruit when cooking, sprinkle over wholemeal toast, or make a tea with ginger.

Chilli, also known as capsicum, is a very hot spice used as a circulatory stimulant and general tonic. It is best avoided where there is indigestion or the person is generally too hot. A pinch of chilli powder added to lemon tea is warming during chills and colds and will help promote a sweat. Thyme herb is a powerful respiratory antiseptic remedy for coughs, viral bronchitis and colds. It is delicious added to a wide variety of vegetables, pulses and grains. Parsley is high in minerals and vitamins, especially iron. It is a key ingredient in the highly nutritious Middle Eastern dish tabbouleh.

### ***Recipe: Tabbouleh***

*100g bulgar (cracked) wheat*

*2 tablespoons of olive oil*

*2 tablespoons of fresh lemon juice*

*1 clove garlic, peeled and crushed*

*1-2 tablespoons finely chopped mint*

*3 or more tablespoons finely chopped parsley*

*4 tomatoes, chopped*

*5 cm cucumber, diced*

*Cos or other lettuce leaves to serve & Salt to taste*

*Put the bulgar wheat in a bowl with a good pinch of salt and cover with 150ml boiling for 15 minutes, to allow the wheat to absorb the water. Then add the oil, lemon juice, garlic, mint and parsley. At this point the salad can be left for up to 24 hours before using. Stir in the tomato and cucumber. Serve on a base of lettuce leaves*

## **Nutritional Mushrooms**

There has been considerable interest in the health benefits of certain types of mushrooms. No other group of natural substances has been found to have such a profound effect on the health and balance of the immune system and the body's ability to maintain balance in the face of multiple challenges. The use of mushroom nutrition is standard practice in Japan and other Asian countries – we are just beginning to recognise their value in the West.

Of particular interest are Reishi mushrooms (Ling zhi in Chinese). In traditional Chinese medicine they are considered to nourish the blood, and strengthen the spleen and stomach. Modern research is showing that Reishi have anti-tumour and immune stimulating properties. They have been found to protect DNA from damage by free radicals, and normalise blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels. They are also used to treat allergies such as hayfever.

Shiitake have some similar properties; both Shiitake and Reishi can be helpful for reducing the side-effects associated with chemotherapy and to improve quality of life for those with advanced cancer. Shiitake has been found of specific value for ME/CFS sufferers. They are now widely available in supermarkets.

### ***Recipe: Shiitake Mushrooms in Soy Sauce with Sesame Seeds***

*450g of shiitake mushrooms alone or mixed with ordinary  
2 tablespoons of olive oil  
2 teaspoons of cornflower  
4 tablespoons of tamari or shoyu soy sauce  
1 tablespoon of sesame seeds*

*Wash, dry and slice the mushrooms. Heat the oil in the pan and add the mushrooms; fry for about 5 minutes, or until tender and heated through. Mix the cornflower with the tamari sauce and add to the pan; stir until the liquid has thickened. Season to taste and serve sprinkled with sesame seeds. Delicious with warm rolls or toast, or serve with boiled rice and stir-fried vegetables.*

## Phytoestrogens

There has been increasing interest about the benefits of naturally occurring substances known as 'phytoestrogens' (PEs) found in a wide range of plants. PEs share some of the same actions with estrogens produced in the body, but are many times weaker than endogenous estrogens. Put very simply, these plant hormones can exert either a weak estrogenic effect on a menopausal woman, or a weak anti-estrogenic effect on a menstruating woman.

They can help to regulate the menstrual cycle, improve premenstrual symptoms, relieve menopausal problems and they may help to reduce the incidence of estrogen-dependent cancers such as many types of breast cancer. Cross-cultural studies consistently show that women who eat 'traditional', highly unrefined diets (which are typically high in PEs), excrete higher amounts of estrogen than western women and report fewer menopausal symptoms. And they are not just useful for woman – research is showing that phytoestrogens are beneficial for male reproductive health too.

Such plants include soya and miso, pulses such as chickpeas, lentils and alfalfa, seeds such as fennel and flax, grains such as wheatgerm, some medicinal plants such as red clover and other vegetables. The level of PEs tends to be greater when plants are young such as sprouting seeds, when plants are producing seeds, or when plants are stressed by drought or insect attack. The drought-related increase in PEs seems to reduce fertility of grazing animals by acting as a type of contraceptive, hence reducing the number of animals who eat the plant.

There are 6 main types of PE consumed by humans. Four are briefly outlined below:

**Isoflavonoids** : found in alfalfa, chickpeas, cherries, parsley, mung beans, whole grains, soya.

**Lignans**: found in linseed, rye, buckwheat, millet, sesame and sunflower seeds, legumes and beans, whole grains. A rich source of fibre.

**Saponins**: found in wild yam, fenugreek, root vegetables, potato family, grains

**Phytosterols**: The major role of these substances is in the intestine where they compete with cholesterol for absorption leading to lower cholesterol levels. Many oils, especially sesame and wheat germ oils, contain phytosterols.

A daily portion of pulses, wholegrains and seeds should ensure an adequate intake.

### ***Recipe : HRT Cake***

*There are many different versions of the so-called HRT cake, packed full of phytoestrogen-rich ingredients. A quick search on Google will throw-up many variations.*

*50 grams sunflower seeds*

*50 grams pumpkin seeds*

*50 grams linseeds*

*50 grams sesame seeds*

*50 grams almond flakes*

*50 grams raisins*

*100 grams cranberries*

*150 grams chopped dried apricots*

*2" stem ginger, chopped*

*½ teaspoon nutmeg*

*½ teaspoon cinnamon,*

*1 tablespoon malt extract*

*3 tablespoons apple juice*

*425 ml (approx) of soya milk (add more milk if necessary to make a soft dropping consistency).*

*Mix all the ingredients in a large bowl. Add the cranberries, apple juice and soya milk and stir well. Leave to soak for approx half an hour. Pre-heat the oven to 190 degrees. Line a loaf tin with baking paper and spoon mixture in. Cook in pre-heated oven for approx 1¼ hrs. When cooled, slice and store in freezer.*

## Seaweed

Seaweed is especially popular in the Orient and has been a part of everyday diet there for thousands of years. Seaweeds contain more minerals than any other food source - up to ten times more calcium than milk and eight times more iron than beef.

There are three types depending on how much exposure to light they have received.

- Brown types of seaweed include wakame (a constituent of miso soup) kombu and arame.
- Red seaweed, used as food, includes dulse (particularly linked with cholesterol reduction) .
- Green seaweed includes Nori (often used to wrap sushi). Usually sold in dry form all you have to do is rinse and soak them and they'll become soft a gain.
- Kelp is particularly rich in iodine which boosts the functioning of the thyroid.

One of the more interesting claims made about seaweed is its ability to remove heavy metals such as strontium and barium from the body. Traditionally, they are considered to be cleansing, diuretic and anti-inflammatory. Other health benefits include regulating the hormones, enriching the bloodstream, assisting in metabolism. However, due to their iodine content, they should not be taken more than once a week in people with hyperthyroidism (overactive thyroid)

Seaweed feeds the hair shafts and the ducts of the scalp to help improve the health of the hair. It has been said that the thick, black, lustrous hair of the Japanese is partly due to the inclusion of seaweed in their diets.

Seaweeds can be bought from most health or Asian shops in dried form. Only a very small quantity of dried seaweed is needed because it expands considerably once rehydrated. Wash to remove excess salt and then soak in water for a few minutes. The tough stems of some seaweeds such as wakame, should be cut out before eating. Then the seaweed can be shredded if necessary and either used raw or simmered in water for up to 30 minutes until very tender.

Seaweed can be added to stir-fry, salads or made into soups.

### ***Recipe: Wakame salad***

*Soak some pieces of wakame in water until soft. Cut out the tough stems, shred the wakame and sprinkle with wine vinegar, lemon juice or ideally rice vinegar to taste, a dash of good soy sauce, a little honey and a pinch of salt if needed. Hot spices such as chilli can be added, and some sliced onion and garlic. Leave to marinate for as long as is convenient and eat as a nibble on its own or with brown rice and/or stir-fried vegetables.*

### ***Did you know...***

***Beans and grains contain a substance called phytic acid which blocks the absorption of minerals. You can reduce this problem by soaking them for 18 hours before cooking. Alternatively you can add seaweed to your pot of grains or beans which makes more minerals available and ensures that some will be absorbed. Doing this also helps pulses cook more quickly.***

### **Bibliography:**

For a collection of really excellent recipes and good information about the health benefits of whole foods, we recommend 'Kitchen Pharmacy' by Rose Elliot and Carlo de Paoli (1991), ISBN 1-85592-807-8. Most of the recipes in this leaflet are taken from this book.

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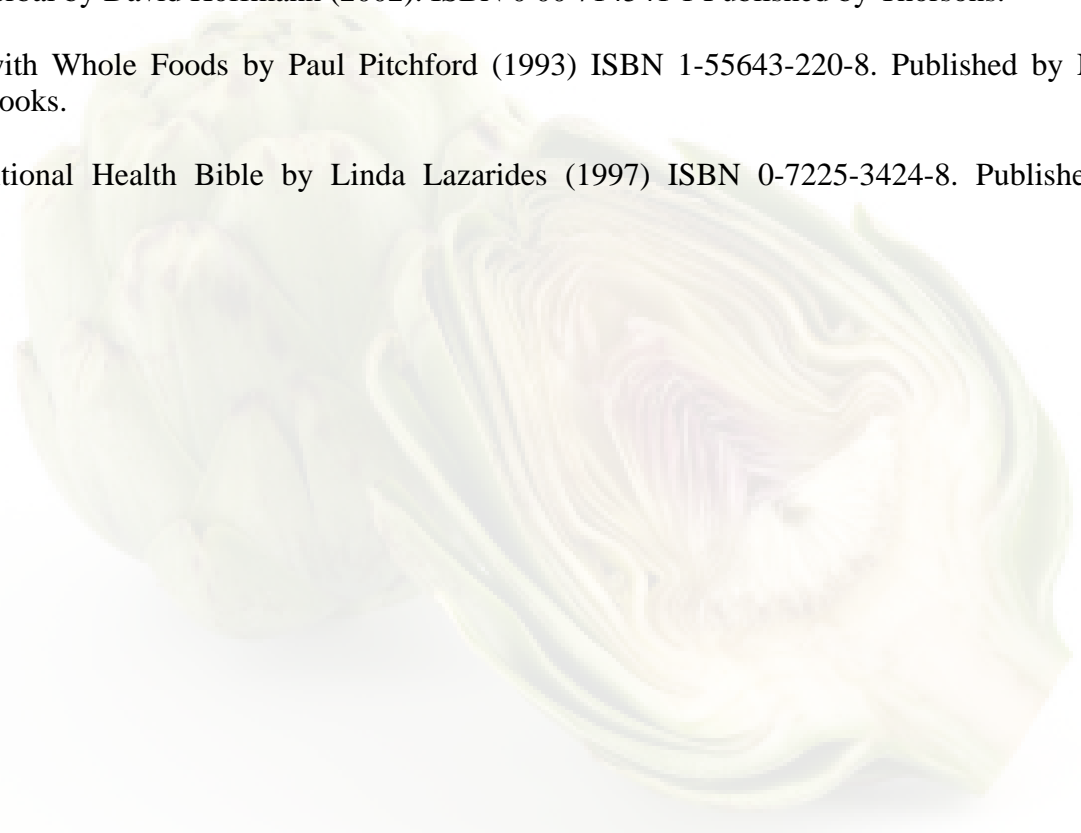
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*This booklet is intended for general information purposes. If you have a health  
problem, you are advised to consult your GP and see a qualified therapist.*

*We suggest that new foods and dietary changes are introduced gradually.*

*People with nut allergies may also react to seeds – caution is required.*

*When collecting food in the wild, please ensure that you have identified the plant  
correctly – mistakes can be fatal.*