

Stress & Mood Regulation Foods

Enjoy this quick, easy lunch this spring and throughout the summer to support your overall health, mood, and well-being.

Key mood-busting nutrients include omega-3 fatty acids, B vitamins, vitamin C, amino acids (proteins), vitamin D, and probiotics.

Fish, especially cold water fatty fish (sardines, mackerel, anchovy, salmon, herring), contain stress-relieving compounds necessary for producing mood-regulating neurotransmitters (dopamine and serotonin). Studies show that eating fish twice per week may protect the brain from damage and improve cognitive function.

Legumes are good sources of fiber (reduce oxidative stress and inflammation) and nutrients involved in stress response pathways and mood regulation including magnesium, B vitamins, and tryptophan.

Berries are delicious and rich in phytochemicals, vitamins, and minerals involved in stress response, mood regulation, and cognitive function. Eating apples, pears, and citrus fruits are also associated with lower stress levels.

Leafy Greens and Crucifers are also high in magnesium, essential for managing the stress response system and cortisol levels. Phytochemicals as well as vitamin C and carotenoids are key antioxidants.

Bell peppers are loaded with the antioxidant vitamin C which has been shown to boost cognitive function, fight off depression and anxiety, and promote helpful neurotransmitters.

Cocoa/Dark Chocolate may provide short-term improved mood and reduction in anxiety. Cocoa appears to increase cerebral blood flow; and, the compound, PEA (phenethylamine) triggers the release of endorphins and mood-enhancing neurochemicals in the brain.

Enjoy!

Renee



Stress Busting Lunch

1 serving
5 minutes

Ingredients

3 ozs Canned Mackerel (drained)
1/2 cup Cannellini Beans (drained, rinsed)
1 stalk Celery (chopped)
1 tbsp Mayonnaise (see notes)
1/2 tsp Dijon Mustard
1/2 tsp Dried Dill
Sea Salt & Black Pepper (to taste)
1/4 head Romaine Hearts (leaves separated)
1/4 cup Matchstick Carrots
1/2 Yellow Bell Pepper
1 Cucumber (mini)
1/2 cup Strawberries
1/2 oz Dark Chocolate

Directions

- 1 Add the tuna, beans, celery, mayo, mustard, dill, salt, and black pepper to a bowl. Mix to combine.
- 2 To assemble, add romaine leaves to plate, top them evenly with the bean and tuna mix, shredded carrots, bell pepper, and cucumber. Enjoy!
- 3 Enjoy the strawberries and chocolate after your fish-lettuce boats.

Notes

Tinned Fish: Tins are usually 4.4 oz including the liquid (water or oil); fish content is 3 oz.

No Mackerel: Use canned/tinned in water anchovy, salmon, sardines, or low mercury tuna. My favorite brands are Wild Planet and Season. Available at most grocery stores.

Mayonnaise & Mayo Substitutes: Choose a high quality brand such as Primal Kitchen (they have great flavors too) or choose a vegan mayo (if intolerant to eggs) or replace mayo with Greek yogurt or 1/2 of an avocado mashed.

More Flavor: Add more fresh herbs like parsley or use a flavored mayonnaise (see mayo note).

Time Saver: Purchase bagged shredded carrots, prewashed romaine (or bibb lettuce), pre cut celery, cucumber, peppers.

Leftovers: Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to three days.