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A Recipe For Longevity: 33 Of The Healthiest Foods On Earth

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Is it possible to live to 125 or maybe 150? It's certainly a possibility, as discussed on Oprah Winfrey's recent show on longevity. She visited me at my farm to learn how, at 86, I am enjoying the robust health, energy, and mental creativity of someone many decades younger. My secret: large quantities of fruit and vegetables, plus an hour of daily exercise.

No pills, not even aspirin, and certainly no supplements ever enter my mouth -- everything I need comes from my fish-vegetarian diet, which incorporates 30-40 different kinds of fruit and vegetables every week. Even though I am Chairman and Owner of Dole Food Company, I do most of my own grocery shopping, and even took Oprah on an impromptu trip to Costco, in a day that included bike riding, exercise in the gym, and juicing vegetables in the kitchen. Oprah marveled at how much I eat, and yet never gain a pound. In fact, I expend a lot of energy in my 50-60 minutes of cardio and strength training every day. Plus there's the fact that fruit and vegetables tend to be lower in calories, but higher in filling fiber and other nutrients that help you feel satisfied.

By eating many fruits and vegetables in place of fast food and junk food, people could avoid obesity. Obesity accelerates aging even faster than smoking, according to scientific research.

We created the North Carolina Research Campus to study the health benefits of fruits and vegetables. It is the only campus in the world encompassing eight universities all working together for the benefit of health and longevity. These include Duke University, UNC Chapel Hill, NC State University, UNC Charlotte, North Carolina Central University, NC A&T State University, UNC Greensboro and Appalachian State University. We've gathered a comprehensive array of famous scientists and scientific equipment under one roof, including a two-story, 950 megahertz, 8-ton superconducting magnet. It is the largest and most powerful magnet in the world and will help us look at both plant and human cells at the most minute level. We are constantly doing research on all fruit and vegetables, including the ones listed below, which are the mainstay of my diet.

The Healthiest Foods on Earth

Pineapple	Speeds post-surgery	Promotes joint health	Reduces asthma inflammation
Blueberries	Restore antioxidant levels	Reverse age-related brain decline	Prevent urinary tract infection
Spinach	Helps maintain mental sharpness	Reduces the risk of cancers of the liver, ovaries, colon and prostate	Top nutrient density
Red Bell Pepper	Reduces risk of lung, prostate, ovarian and cervical cancer	Protects against sunburn	Promotes heart health
Broccoli	Reduces diabetic damage	Lowers risk of prostate, bladder, colon, pancreatic, gastric and breast cancer	Protects the brain in event of injury
Tomato	Reduces inflammation	Lowers risk of developing esophageal, stomach, colorectal, lung and pancreatic cancer	Reduces cardiovascular disease risk

Apple	Supports immunity	Fights lung and prostate cancer	Lowers Alzheimer's risk
Artichoke	Helps blood clotting	Antioxidant Superfood	Lowers "bad" cholesterol
Arugula	Lowers birth defect risk	Reduces fracture risk	Protects eye health
Asparagus	Nourishes good gut bacteria	Protects against birth defects	Promotes heart health
Avocado	Limits liver damage	Reduces oral cancer risk	Lowers cholesterol levels
Blackberries	Build bone density	Suppress appetite	Enhance fat burning
Butternut Squash	Supports night vision	Combats wrinkles	Promotes heart health
Cantaloupe	Bolsters immunity	Protects skin against sunburn	Reduces inflammation
Carrot	Antioxidants defend DNA	Fights cataracts	Protects against some cancers
Cauliflower	Stimulates detoxification	Suppresses breast cancer cell growth	Defends against prostate cancer
Cherries	Alleviate arthritic pain and gout	Lower "bad" cholesterol	Reduce inflammation
Cranberries	Alleviate prostate pain	Fight lung, colon and leukemia cancer cells	Prevent urinary tract infection
Green Cabbage	Promotes healthy blood clotting	Reduces risk of prostate, colon, breast and ovarian cancers	Activates the body's natural detoxification systems
Kale	Counters harmful estrogens that can feed cancer	Protects eyes against sun damage and cataracts	Increases bone density
Kiwi	Combats wrinkles	Lowers blood clot risk and reduces blood lipids	Counters constipation
Mango	Supports immunity	Lowers "bad" cholesterol	Regulates homocysteine to protect arteries
Mushrooms	Promote natural detoxification	Reduce the risk of colon and prostate cancer	Lower blood pressure
Orange	Reduces levels of "bad" cholesterol	Lowers risk of cancers of the mouth, throat, breast and stomach, and childhood leukemia	Pectin suppresses appetite
Papaya	Enzymes aid digestion	Reduces risk of lung cancer	Enhances fat burning
Plums & Prunes	Counter constipation	Antioxidants defend against DNA damage	Protects against post-menopausal bone loss
Pomegranate	Enhances sunscreen protection	Lowers "bad" cholesterol	Fights prostate cancer
Pumpkin	Protects joints against polyarthritis	Lowers lung and prostate cancer risk	Reduces inflammation
Raspberries	Inhibit growth of oral, breast, colon and prostate cancers	Antioxidant DNA defense	Lower "bad" cholesterol levels
Strawberries	Protect against Alzheimer's	Reduce "bad" cholesterol	Suppress growth of colon, prostate and oral cancer
Sweet Potato	Reduces stroke risk	Lowers cancer risk	Protect against blindness
Watermelon	Supports male fertility	Reduces risk of several cancers: prostate, ovarian, cervical, oral and pharyngeal	Protects skin against sunburn
Banana	Increases Fat Burning	Lowers risk of colorectal and kidney cancer, leukemia	Reduces asthmas symptoms in children

One of my missions in life is to share this kind of knowledge with others, so they can live more vital, active, satisfying lives. Since acquiring major interests in Dole 26 years ago, educating the public on proper diet has constituted the agenda of my Dole Nutrition Institute. We publish the Dole Nutrition News -- enjoyed by 2.5 million subscribers (sign up at www.dolenutrition.com). We create cooking and nutrition videos, cookbooks, brochures, and other educational collateral, like the chart above. We also provide educational support to teachers, parents and kids through www.dolesuperkids.com.

While Arianna and I do not agree on all issues, we both believe in the importance of proper nutrition. I've known Arianna since she arrived in this country, many decades ago, and am godfather to one of her daughters. I've enjoyed many Mediterranean-style healthy meals at her home, and am helping her increase access to nutrition information, which is why I wanted to share some "food for thought" with her intellectually ravenous.

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Want the latest in nutrition information, articles, recipes and more? Sign up for the FREE Dole Nutrition News to have it all delivered right to your inbox! Click here to receive this online newsletter, free every month!

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David H. Murdock is Chairman and owner of Dole Food Company, Inc., the world's largest producer and marketer of fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, packaged and frozen foods. He is also Chairman, CEO and owner of Castle & Cooke, Inc., a leader in real estate development.

Mr. Murdock advocates healthy eating to promote longevity. His Dole Nutrition Institute is dedicated to nutrition education through an award-winning monthly newsletter, health brochures, cookbooks, videos and the Dole Nutrition website. He recently dedicated the David H. Murdock Core Laboratory Building, the UNC Nutrition Research Building and the NC State Fruit and Vegetable Science Institute Building at the newly opened North Carolina Research Campus, representing a historic partnership with leading universities to advance knowledge about nutrition and disease prevention.

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