

Boost Your Food's Nutrients

17 Simple Prep & Pairing Hacks That Unlock More Nutrition

Sometimes it's not about eating more — it's about a small tweak in prep or pairing that unlocks more nutrition from what's already on your plate. Slicing mushrooms and drying them in the sun boosts their vitamin D; cooking tomatoes with a little oil increases how much lycopene you actually absorb. This guide lists 17 such hacks, colour-coded by the nutrient they boost, with the reasoning behind each and how to do it.

Colour Key

Vitamin D	Antioxidant Boost	Minerals	Calming	Vitamin A	Enzyme Activation	Resistant Starch	Vitamin C	Vitamin E	Circulation
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The 17 Nutrient-Boosting Hacks

Food	Nutrient	The Boost	How to Do It
1. Mushrooms	Vitamin D	Mushrooms naturally contain some vitamin D, but slicing and drying them in direct sunlight significantly boosts their vitamin D content before cooking.	Slice and leave in direct sunlight for 1-2 hours before cooking as usual.
2. Eggs	Vitamin D	Most of an egg's vitamin D and nutrients are concentrated in the yolk, but overcooking can degrade some of it.	Cook yolks lightly (soft-boiled or sunny-side up) rather than well-done, and never discard the yolk.
3. Tomatoes	Antioxidant Boost	Tomatoes are rich in lycopene, but cooking them with a bit of oil increases how much your body can absorb, since it's a fat-soluble antioxidant.	Cook tomatoes in a little olive oil or ghee rather than eating them completely raw and dry.
4. Blueberries / Dark Grapes	Antioxidant Boost	Resveratrol, a key antioxidant in these fruits, is concentrated mostly in the skin.	Eat with the skin on rather than peeling, to get the most antioxidant content.
5. Onions	Antioxidant Boost	Quercetin, an antioxidant found in onions, reduces significantly when cooked for a long time.	Include some raw onion in salads occasionally to get more of the quercetin content.
6. Green Tea	Antioxidant Boost	Vitamin C helps stabilize and improve the absorption of catechins, green tea's main antioxidants.	Add a squeeze of fresh lemon to your cup of green tea.
7. Palak (Spinach)	Minerals	Spinach has good iron content, but pairing it with vitamin C, like a squeeze of lemon, significantly improves how well your body absorbs that iron.	Squeeze fresh lemon over a spinach salad, or add lemon juice to palak dishes.
8. Milk	Minerals	Calcium absorption from milk works best when paired with adequate vitamin D in the body.	Get some sunlight exposure regularly, or choose vitamin D-fortified milk alongside your calcium intake.
9. Turmeric	Calming	Piperine in black pepper can increase the body's absorption of curcumin, turmeric's active anti-inflammatory compound, dramatically.	Add a pinch of black pepper whenever you cook with turmeric or make turmeric milk.

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10. Carrots	Vitamin A	Beta-carotene, which converts to vitamin A, is fat-soluble, so cooking carrots with a little fat significantly increases absorption.	Saute carrots in ghee or oil rather than eating them completely raw and dry.
11. Garlic	Enzyme Activation	Crushing or chopping garlic and letting it rest activates allicin, its key beneficial compound, which forms through an enzyme reaction.	Crush or chop garlic and let it sit for 10 minutes before cooking to let allicin fully form.
12. Broccoli	Enzyme Activation	Cooking destroys the enzyme broccoli needs to form sulforaphane, but a small amount of raw mustard seed powder can restore that enzyme activity.	Sprinkle a small pinch of mustard seed powder over cooked broccoli before serving.
13. Rice	Resistant Starch	Cooling cooked rice converts some of its starch into resistant starch, which feeds good gut bacteria and has a gentler effect on blood sugar.	Cook rice, refrigerate it, and eat it cold or reheated (like in curd rice) instead of only piping hot.
14. Potatoes	Resistant Starch	Like rice, cooling cooked potatoes increases their resistant starch content compared to eating them hot.	Let boiled potatoes cool before eating (like in a potato salad) for the added resistant starch benefit.
15. Oranges / Citrus Fruits	Vitamin C	Vitamin C content gradually degrades with air exposure once a fruit is cut.	Eat citrus fruits fresh, soon after cutting, rather than letting cut pieces sit for hours.
16. Almonds	Vitamin E	Soaking almonds reduces phytic acid, a compound that can otherwise block full nutrient absorption.	Soak overnight and eat in the morning, ideally with the skin removed.
17. Beetroot	Circulation	Beetroot's dietary nitrates, which support healthy blood flow, can degrade with prolonged high-heat cooking.	Eat raw in salads or juice, or cook only lightly rather than boiling for a long time.

Note: These tips are based on general food-science principles around nutrient absorption and stability. Actual impact varies by individual, portion size, and overall diet. This guide is for general education, not medical or dietary prescription — consult a nutritionist for advice specific to your needs.