



Brain Health

Wait, aren't blueberries a "superfood" for the brain? There is no single food that acts as a magic bullet that will improve your brain health. True, blueberries are packed with nutrients, such as antioxidants, that may help improve memory and cognition. However, the term "superfoods" didn't originate from nutrition experts, but rather as part of a food marketing strategy!¹

Taste the rainbow. Focus on a super plate, not just "superfoods." By focusing on a variety of different foods, you'll also be getting a variety of different nutrients that may boost your brain health.²

- ✓ Green leafy vegetables – Think spinach, kale, broccoli!
- ✓ Fatty fish - Salmon, trout, and sardines
- ✓ Not a fan of fish? Get your healthy fats from avocados, flaxseeds, and chia seeds.
- ✓ Berries – Throw some raspberries, blueberries, strawberries, and blackberries into a smoothie or salad.
- ✓ Tea & Coffee
- ✓ Nuts – walnuts look like a brain after all!
- ✓ Dark chocolate - 70% or higher cacao content offers the most benefits.

One Piece of the Puzzle. When it comes to a healthy brain, diet is a just one piece of the puzzle. While diet is very important, sleep, physical activity, hydration, and social connectedness also play a role in brain health.³



1. Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. (2019). Superfoods or Superhype?. The Nutrition Source. <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/superfoods/>
 2. Avery, A. (2020). How Nutrition Impacts the Brain and Mental Health. The Whole U. <https://thewholeu.uw.edu/2020/03/02/nm-2020-nutrition-and-the-brain/>
 Patoine, B. (2021). Your Brain on Food. Dana Foundation. <https://dana.org/article/your-brain-on-food/>

Cooking uses several senses — smell, touch, sight, and taste — that involve different parts of the brain. You also use cognitive skills like planning the meal, problem-solving, creating a grocery list, multi-tasking, and organizing.¹ Put your brain to work and prepare this healthy, brain-boosting meal!

Chicken Florentine

Prep Time: 30 mins / Total Time: 30 mins

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 pound chicken breast, thinly sliced
- ½ teaspoon salt, divided
- ½ teaspoon ground pepper, divided
- ¼ cup finely chopped shallot
- 2 large cloves garlic, minced
- ⅓ cup dry white wine
- 1 pound baby spinach
- ⅓ cup heavy cream
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch

Directions

1. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Season chicken with 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper. Add to the pan and cook, turning once, until just cooked through, 5 to 7 minutes. Transfer to a plate and tent with foil to keep warm.
2. Reduce heat to medium. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon oil, shallot, and garlic to the pan. Cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add wine, scraping up any browned bits. Add spinach in batches and cook, stirring often, until wilted, 3 to 5 minutes. Whisk cream, cornstarch and the remaining 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper in a measuring cup. Stir into the spinach and cook until thickened, about 2 minutes more. Serve with chicken.



1. Cleveland Clinic. (2018) Cooking for Cognition: Why Making a Meal Is Good for Your Brain. Health Essentials. <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/cooking-for-cognition-why-making-a-meal-is-good-for-your-brain/>
 2. Casner, C. (2019). Chicken Florentine. EatingWell. <https://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/269489/chicken-florentine/>

Got questions on other health issues related to sleep health, physical activity, tobacco, or nutrition? Share them with us. For more online health tips visit the Air Force Health Promotion webpage <https://www.airforcemedicine.af.mil/Resources/Health-Promotion/>



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