

Made From Scratch Monthly

Brain-Boosting Meals

Our brain is an energy-intensive organ that uses up to 20% of the body's calories throughout the day. Incorporating more brain-boosting foods into your diet can have a large impact on your brain's overall structure and health, supporting both short and long-term function. Try one of our brain-boosting recipes for your next meal.

Beet, Mandarin, and Farro Salad

- 2 lb. small beets, trimmed
- 1 ¼ c. water
- ½ c. semi-pearled farro
- 2 tbsp red wine vinegar
- ½ medium shallot, finely chopped
- 1 ½ tsp honey
- ¾ tsp Dijon mustard
- ¾ tsp fresh thyme leaves
- ¼ tsp salt
- 6 tbsp olive oil
- 2 c. baby arugula
- ½ c. no-salt-added canned chickpeas, rinsed
- 3 tbsp chopped parsley
- 3 mandarin oranges, segmented
- ¼ c. crumbled feta cheese

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 400°.
2. Place a large piece of foil on a rimmed baking sheet with beets in the center of the foil. Gather the sides of the foil up to make a packet. Roast until the beets are very tender when pierced with a knife, 1-1 ½ hours. When cool enough to handle, slip the skins off the beets. (Alternatively, use 1 ½ lb. cooked, peeled beets.) Cut into 1-in. wedges.
3. Combine water and farro in a small saucepan. Bring to a simmer and cook, covered, until the farro is tender and most of the water is absorbed, 25-35 minutes. Drain off excess water, if necessary. Spread the farro on a plate and let cool, about 5 minutes.
4. Combine vinegar, shallot, honey, mustard, thyme, and salt in a large bowl. Gradually whisk in oil. Add arugula, chickpeas, parsley, and the roasted beets and cooled farro and toss to coat. Serve topped with mandarins and feta.



Make-ahead tip: Refrigerate cooked beets, farro, and dressing separately for up to two days.

Chicken Cordon Bleu Burger

- ¼ c. low-fat mayonnaise
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 5 tbsp finely chopped shallot, divided
- 1 ½ tsp finely chopped fresh thyme, divided
- 1 lb. ground chicken
- ⅓ c. finely diced ham
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp ground pepper
- 4 slices Swiss cheese
- 4 large slices cut in half toasted pumpernickel bread
- 12 large leaves spinach, tough stems removed

Instructions:

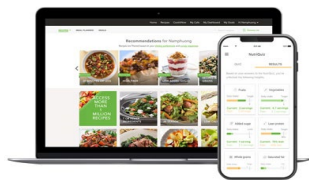
1. Preheat grill to medium-high (stovetop option below).
2. Combine mayonnaise, mustard, 1 tbsp shallot, and ½ tsp thyme in a small bowl. Set aside.
3. In a medium bowl combine, without overmixing, the remaining 4 tbsp of shallot, 1 tsp thyme, chicken, ham, salt, and pepper. Form into 4 patties, about ¾ in. thick.
4. Oil the grill rack. Grill the burgers 4-5 minutes per side, turning once, or until a thermometer inserted in the center registers 165°. Top with cheese cook until melted, 1-2 minutes.
5. Add burgers to toasted bread with the herb mayonnaise and spinach.



Brain Boosting Note: Leafy greens such as spinach are rich in brain-healthy nutrients like vitamin K, lutein, folate, and beta carotene. Research suggests plant-based foods may help slow cognitive decline.

Stovetop Variation: Coat a nonstick pan with cooking spray, preferably cast-iron or a grill pan, heat over medium-high heat for 1-2 minutes. Add burgers, reduce heat to medium and cook, turning once, until thermometer registers 165° in the center.

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Mediterranean Tuna Antipasto Salad

- 1 15-19 oz can of beans
- 2 5-6 oz cans chunk light tuna, in water
- 1 large red bell pepper
- ½ c. finely chopped red onion
- ½ c. chopped fresh parsley
- 4 tsp capers
- 1 ½ finely chopped fresh rosemary
- ½ c. lemon juice
- 4 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- Freshly ground pepper, to taste
- ¼ tsp salt
- 8 c. mixed salad greens

Instructions:

1. Combine beans, tuna, bell pepper, onion, parsley, capers, rosemary, ¼ cup lemon juice, and 2 tbsp oil in a medium bowl. Season with pepper.
2. Combine the remaining ¼ cup lemon juice, 2 tbsp oil, and salt in a large bowl. Add salad greens; toss to coat.
3. Divide the greens among 4 plates. Top each with the tuna salad.



Brain Boosting Note: Oily fish such as salmon, mackerel, trout, herring, sardines, and tuna offer the omega-3s EPA and DHA. Keeping the brain fueled with DHA (Docosahexaenoic acid) and EPA (Eicosapentaenoic acid) is important since the brain is the body's fattiest organ.

Tutti-Frutti Muesli

- ½ c. nonfat or plain yogurt
- ½ c. blueberries
- ¼ c. chopped apple
- ¼ c. sliced banana
- ¼ c. unsweetened muesli (see tip)
- 1 tsp honey, or pure maple syrup

Instructions:

1. Stir together yogurt, blueberries, apple, banana, muesli and honey (or maple syrup) to taste in a bowl.

Make-Ahead Tip: Cover and refrigerate for up to one day.

Brain Boosting Note: Blueberries contain flavonoid antioxidants which help to reduce inflammation and improve communication between brain cells to boost learning and short-term memory.

