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Asset HealthTalk

Keeping your health and wellbeing in the know

Add Flavor Not Calories to Your Coffee

Plain coffee is nutritious. There is solid reasoning behind the old gardener's tip that involves sprinkling coffee grounds near the roots of plants for a natural, sustainable fertilizer — coffee contains micronutrients, such as potassium, magnesium and niacin. But when you add too much dairy or sugar to your coffee, the nutritional value changes. Below are a few ways you can maximize the flavor of your coffee without compromising your health or the healthful qualities of coffee.

Spice up your coffee with — well, spices.

Give dried or fresh herbs and cocoa a try, too. Consider these: cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, chocolate mint (the plant), or unsweetened cocoa. You can also try adding a ¼ teaspoon of vanilla extract to smooth out the flavor of your morning coffee without adding sugar.

Add a small scoop of coconut oil.

Adding coconut oil in replacement of creamers can have a similar effect — it makes your coffee creamy. Experts recommend only adding a small portion, such as a teaspoon, because about 80 percent of the calories from coconut oil come from saturated fat.

Experiment with different milk options and limit creams.

Try almond or rice milk as an alternative to regular milk. Coconut milk is another option, but just like coconut oil, coconut milk can contain high amounts of saturated fat. So if you choose coconut milk, it is recommended that you only use a splash.

"Make Your Coffee Healthier: Best Sweeteners, Milks, Spices," Laura Jeffers, health.clevelandclinic.org, May 9, 2014.

"Turn Your Coffee Habit Into a Healthy Morning Ritual With These 5 Tips," Whitney Tingle, Aug. 16, 2013.

"Calorie Count: Check Your Coffee Cup," Mayo Clinic Staff, mayoclinic.org, May 15, 2013.

"The Truth About Coconut Oil," Matthew Kadey, webmd.com, Jan. 29, 2016.



DETOXIFY YOUR HOME WITH AN INDOOR GARDEN

SNAKE PLANT

In the age of technology, homes are becoming more modernized, efficient and updated. While this is wonderful for many reasons, these renovations can also make it easier to trap indoor air pollutants, such as ammonia, benzene and formaldehyde. These chemicals can arise from common household items, such as paint, and pollute your home's atmosphere without any warning signs. Having indoor plants is not only a simple way to detoxify the air in your home, but indoor greenery can

be a beautiful addition to your interior aesthetic. Serious health-related consequences can result from neglecting the air quality in your home. Asthma, frequent headaches and digestive issues are just a few of the side effects of breathing polluted indoor air.

The plants listed below are some of the most effective low-maintenance air-purifiers Mother Nature has to offer. If you have a pet, check that the plant is not poisonous before bringing it into your home.

SNAKE PLANT (shown in the image above)

Reduces formaldehyde, absorbs carbon dioxide during the day, and releases oxygen at night



ENGLISH IVY

Reduces airborne fecal matter and carcinogens from smoking

BOSTON FERN

Reduces formaldehyde and functions as a natural air humidifier



LADY PALM

Filters multiple indoor air pollutants



BAMBOO PALM

Reduces benzene and trichloroethylene, and functions as a natural humidifier



PEACE LILY

Reduces trichloroethylene, benzene, acetone and alcohols from the air



GOLDEN POTHOS

Reduces formaldehyde and carbon monoxide

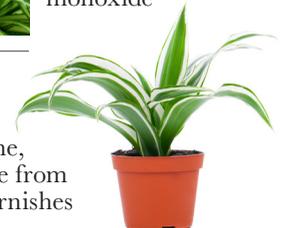


SPIDER PLANT

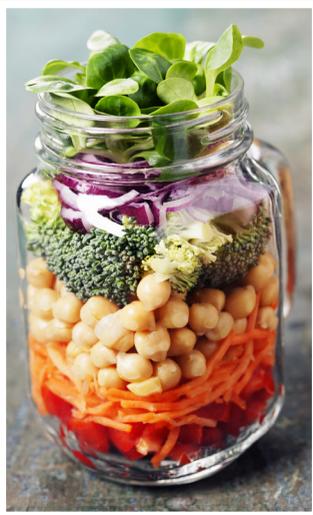
Reduces carbon monoxide

DRACAENA

Reduces trichloroethylene, which can come from solvents and varnishes



"Planting Healthier Indoor Air," Luz Claudio, ncbi.nlm.nih.gov, Oct. 1, 2011.



Your Guide to Creating Mouthwatering Mason Jar Salads

Planning ahead and packing a nutritious lunch for work is a great way to eat healthy and save money. However, if you were to make five sandwiches on Sunday to have on hand, they'd probably start to get mushy by midweek. The solution? Mason jar salads. The tall, cylindrical shape of these jars allows you to thoughtfully layer ingredients

so the dressing stays on the bottom and doesn't make the other toppings soggy. You can prepare all your lunches for the workweek, and the sealed jars will keep ingredients fresh for up to seven days (less if you're adding meat).

Each week you can design a salad combination, buy and prep all the ingredients,

then divide them among your jars. Use five quart-sized mason jars (pint-sized for side salads), then strategically stack your salad components. Wide-mouthed jars make it easier to pack and pour your salad. Wait to add more perishable items, such as avocado, chicken and hard-boiled eggs, until a few days before you're planning to eat them.

THE ORDER YOU ASSEMBLE YOUR CREATION IS KEY:



Place your salads in your fridge to grab and go. When you're ready to eat, shake the jar to dress your salad and pour it into a bowl. Preparing meals ahead of time can help you stay on track all week.

GRAINS & LEGUMES

Beans, Chickpeas, Lentils, Orzo, Pasta, Edamame, Farro, Quinoa, Wheat Berry, Couscous, Rice

PRODUCE

Roasted Peppers, Olives, Artichokes, Tomatoes, Onions, Carrots, Broccoli, Celery, Apples, Pears, Peaches, Citrus Slices, Berries, Pomegranate Seeds, Squash, Caramelized Onions, Root Vegetables

PROTEIN

Chicken, Hard-boiled Eggs, Meat, Salmon, Tuna, Tofu

NUTS

Pecans, Peanuts, Cashews, Almonds, Pine Nuts, Walnuts, Pistachios

SEEDS

Sunflower, Pumpkin, Chia, Sesame, Hemp, Flaxseed

DRIED FRUIT

Raisins, Cranberries, Apricots, Cherries, Figs, Dates

DRESSING

Flavored Oils and Vinegars, Lemon, Salsa, Vinaigrettes