

Avocados - Not Fattening at All

By Dr Karin Elgar, Nutritional Therapist

Many people seem to think that avocados are fattening. This could not be further from the truth. Avocados are a healthy and nutritious food even if you want to lose weight.

It is true that the fat content of avocados is higher than that of most other fruit (avocados are considered fruit rather than vegetables) but this is mainly mono-unsaturated fat which is beneficial for health, heart health in particular, and does NOT make you put on weight. If you are conscious about your fat intake it is the artificial trans-fats (in many processed foods) and excessive saturated fat (from dairy products and red meat) that you should be concerned about.

Avocados are very high in fibre which is important for a healthy digestion, to keep your cholesterol levels down and can also play a role in weight loss as it makes you feel full for longer. Avocados are also a source of a number of vitamins and antioxidants, in particular vitamin E which helps keep your heart healthy and your skin smooth.

Avocados are easy to digest making them a good food for anyone who is unwell and half a pear counts as one of the (minimum) five portions of fruit and vegetables that you should have per day.

So have half an avocado as a snack or add some to your salad or sandwich. See left for some recipes.

Recipes

Guacamole

A classic dip. Serve with vegetable sticks and/or oatcakes or toasted wholemeal pitta bread for a light snack or starter.

Serves 4

3 avocados, peeled, pitted and chopped
Juice of one lemon
1-2 garlic cloves, crushed,
2 large tomatoes, diced
1 jalapeno pepper, finely chopped
1 teaspoon chilli powder
1 tablespoon of olive oil
Salt and pepper.



Mash or blend the avocados with the lemon juice. Mix in garlic, tomatoes and pepper. Finally add the chilli powder, olive oil, salt and pepper to taste.

For more on superfoods see www.fitwithfood.co.uk

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Sweet potato, avocado and egg salad

This is a filling salad, perfect for a wheat and gluten-free lunch. The lambs lettuce and avocado are full of vitamins A, C and E and other antioxidants which help combat inflammation and support the immune system. The eggs are an excellent source of protein, vitamins and minerals, and lecithin, which supports a healthy brain and fat metabolism.

Serves 2

250g sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into cubes
1 tsp cumin
Pinch of hot chilli powder
2 tbsp olive oil
3 medium hardboiled eggs, cut into eighth
50g black pitted olives
1 medium avocado, peeled, deseeded and cut into strips
2 handful of lambs lettuce

Dressing:

1dsp balsamic vinegar
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

Combine olive oil, cumin and hot chilli powder and coat sweet potato with the mixture. Roast at 200°C for approx 20-30 min until the sweet potatoes are crisp and golden on the outside and soft inside. Leave to cool.

Combine dressing ingredients and gently mix with the potatoes, eggs and olives. Serve on a bed of lambs lettuce.

Chicken, mango and avocado salad

This salad is great if you are under stress or want to lose weight as it supports healthy blood sugar balance and is packed with lean protein, fibre, vitamins and minerals and healthy fats.

Serves 2

250g chicken breast, roasted
1 large avocado
1 large mango
2 handful lettuce leaves, e.g. romaine
3 tbsp pine kernels
3 tbsp walnut oil
1 tbsp lime juice
Salt and pepper to taste
1 tbsp fresh chopped mint

Cut chicken, avocado and mango into strips and mix carefully with the lettuce leaves.

Roast pine kernels in a dry pan for about 3 min until they start to turn golden.

Prepare a dressing from the oil, lime juice, salt and pepper. Pour dressing over salad and sprinkle with the pine kernels and mint.