

Strawberries— A Most Delicious Superfood

By Dr Karin Elgar, Nutritional Therapist

I recently had my first strawberries of the season and they were delicious. They came from Spain but not long and the British ones will appear on the shelves. These days strawberries are of course available all year round, but they are at their best when in season, June to August.

Strawberries are an excellent source of vitamin C and other phytonutrients, including anthocyanins and ellagitannins which are thought to protect us from cancer, heart disease and other chronic conditions.

Strawberries have a low glycaemic index and glycaemic load. I.e. despite their naturally sweet taste, strawberries (together with other berries) have the lowest impact on blood sugar of all fruit. A pound of strawberries has the same effect on raising blood sugar levels as a third of a medium banana or eight raisins.



On the downside, strawberries are one of the fruits and vegetables most often found to contain pesticide residues. So try to get organic ones if you can. Together with citrus and kiwis, strawberries are also the fruit most likely to cause allergic reactions such as hives. If this is the case for you, unfortunately you will have to give them a miss. But there are still lots of other berries with similar health benefits and great taste.

Strawberries are very perishable and should therefore not be stored for more than a few days. Store in the fridge and wash only shortly before use.

Strawberries are delicious on their own or can be added to fruit and savoury salads, yoghurt, breakfast cereal, smoothies, etc. See overleaf for some ideas.

Recipes

Strawberry Breakfast Smoothie

In addition to the antioxidants from the strawberries, this smoothie is a good source of omega 3 fats from the linseeds and of protein from the milk and the linseeds which helps control blood sugar thereby maintaining even energy levels.

Serves 1

*½ banana
100g strawberries
100ml milk or soya milk
1 tsp of ground linseeds*

Blend all ingredients until smooth and serve immediately.

Chocolate Covered Strawberries

Strawberries and chocolate are an unbeatable combination! Like the strawberries dark chocolate is high in antioxidants and is also thought to have mood enhancing properties. Choose a good quality dark chocolate with at least 70% cocoa solids, rather than cheaper varieties which may be much higher in sugar and may contain harmful trans fats.

Makes 15

*100g dark chocolate
15 big strawberries
15 small wooden skewers*

Break the chocolate into small pieces and melt in a bowl over simmering water.

Once the chocolate is melted place each strawberry on a skewer and dip the tip into the chocolate until well covered. Put on a piece of baking parchment for the chocolate to cool and set.