



# This season's picks

Discover what's 'in' this winter and give your diet a health-boosting makeover with our selection of the season's highlights

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## PEARS

Oh-so-sweet and super juicy, the comice and conference varieties of pear are high on our list of fruity picks. Not only are they full of fibre, but they also get top marks for their vitamin C and K content. And research by Holland's Wageningen University linked high consumption of white-fleshed fruit such as pears with a lower stroke risk.

**TRY THIS:** Add a diced pear to a handful of rocket, chunks of low-fat feta cheese, pine nuts and a drizzle of olive oil for a heart-healthy salad.



## PURPLE SPROUTING BROCCOLI

Add a colourful punch to meals with this beautiful-looking veggie. It's bursting with phytochemicals – thought to help protect us from some forms of cancer. It's also full of iron and contains vitamin C, which aids the absorption of iron.

**TRY THIS:** Lightly steam and serve with black pepper and a small knob of butter.

## BEETROOT

This delicious root vegetable contains nitrates, which are thought to help lower blood pressure. A recent study showed that people who drank one glass of beetroot juice a day had significantly lower blood pressure after just 24 hours. Other studies have shown that drinking beetroot juice also helps boost stamina for exercise. Beetroot is also low in calories and fat.

**TRY THIS:** For a high-strength liver-cleansing drink, blend the juice of one beetroot with two carrots and a stalk of celery.



## APPLES

They say an apple a day keeps the doctor away, so munch on crunchy British apples as one of your 5 a day. A great on-the-go snack, the humble apple is packed with pectin, a soluble fibre with cholesterol-lowering properties. Fresh apples are also loaded with vitamin C, potassium and antioxidants.

**TRY THIS:** Fill a cored apple with a handful of raw chopped nuts and bake with a spoonful of honey and sprinkling of cinnamon for a healthy after-dinner treat.

PHOTOGRAPHS: ISTOCK



## RHUBARB

Rhubarb is good for fibre and vitamin C and can be used in savoury and sweet dishes. A study carried out by the Scottish Crop Research Institute revealed that baking rhubarb for 20 minutes dramatically increases its levels of anti-cancerous compounds.

**TRY THIS:** Dice the stalks and simmer with honey and water for healthy stewed rhubarb. Serve with low-fat natural yoghurt.



## Meal matches SIMPLE DIET CHEF MEAL IDEAS

- 1 Mix steamed purple sprouting broccoli into Tomato & Vegetable Pasta.
- 2 Eat sautéed curly kale with Salmon & Vegetable Bake.
- 3 Add sliced pear into Original Granola.
- 4 Try a spoonful of stewed rhubarb with Original Porridge.

## JERUSALEM ARTICHOKE

Not to be confused with the green globe artichoke, the Jerusalem artichoke is rich in inulin, a carbohydrate linked with good gut health due to its bacteria-promoting qualities. Jerusalem artichokes also contain vitamin C, iron, phosphorus and potassium.

**TRY THIS:** Use Jerusalem artichokes instead of mashed potato. Boil, mash and garnish with mixed herbs.



## KALE

One of the green gods of veggies, curly kale is a nutrient powerhouse, crammed with heart-friendly, antioxidants which can protect against cancer, including vitamins K, A, C and E. For those who don't consume dairy, kale is an excellent source of calcium.

**TRY THIS:** Kale is quite sharp, and works best when sautéed with garlic or shallots.

