

Growing Wellness Together: Iftar Cooking Class

Featured ingredient:

Lentils!



High in fiber

Dietary fiber has lots of health benefits and is found in all whole grains, vegetables, and fruits. Here are some of the benefits:

- Lowers cholesterol- Dietary fiber can slow the absorption of cholesterol in other foods you are eating.
- Gut health- You may have heard about pro-biotics, but fiber is the *pre*-biotic that feeds all those “good” bacteria in the gut.
- Blood sugar- Like with cholesterol, dietary fiber can slow the absorption of sugar in the foods you are eating.

High in protein

When paired with a whole grain (like whole wheat in bread or rice) it has the same protein content as meat. Lean protein (protein sources low in fat) is important for the health of all our body systems, not just muscles!

High in potassium

Potassium is an essential electrolyte to help our body stay active. Potassium can also counteract the harmful effects of sodium on your heart and blood pressure.

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Extra Virgin* Olive oil!



Contains healthy fats

Fats can get a bad name, but olive oil is high in monounsaturated fats. These can

- Protect against harmful inflammation
- Lower LDL (“bad”) cholesterol
- Reduce blood pressure

All of these benefits are amplified if use olive oil to *replace* other kinds of oils or fats (like butter or lard)

High in antioxidants

Olive oil is high in *polyphenols*, a compound that plants make that help to fight *free radicals* in your body. By doing this *antioxidants* help

- Prevent cancers
- Reduce inflammation (inflammation can cause stress on your heart, increase pain from arthritis, and increase your blood pressure)
- Reduce the risk of stroke and hardening of the arteries.

*** There are different kinds of olive oil but *Extra virgin* is the least processed and has the most health benefits. Also be sure you are buying just olive oil, as sometimes it will be blended with other oils that aren’t as healthy**