

Larder Essentials

There are some basic larder essentials you should always have to hand so you won't need to go for the fast food option.

Bulgar Wheat

It's packed with fibre and carbohydrate, and is low in fat. Soak it in boiling water at a ratio of 40/60 (in favour of water) with a teaspoon of rapeseed oil. Add chopped tomatoes, herbs and your favourite dressing for a quick salad.

70% Dark Chocolate

When having a sweet temptation, then go for dark chocolate. It contains little fat and tastes so pure you won't eat too much either.

Soya Beans/Edamame

These beans are the only common plant food that contains complete protein and all the essential amino acids. Try instead of peas, and in stir fries and curry dishes. They can also be stored in the freezer.

Butter Beans

Mix with a spoonful of sun-dried tomato paste and flaked tuna for a fast snack or post-race top-up.

Balsamic Vinegar

Great for dressings and adding flavour to sauces.

Watercress

Recent studies suggest that regular eating of this wonder food can vastly reduce DNA damage to blood cells and reduce the risk of developing cancer. It's such a versatile leaf that it's mad not to have it on the shopping list. Add to salads, sandwiches, beef dishes and soups. Store in the fridge.

Sea Salt

Although salt isn't good if used in excess as it can raise blood pressure, there are two points in its favour over table salt. Athletes need it to avoid cramp and replace its loss through sweat. And sea salt's pure natural flavour means you don't need to use nearly as much compared with regular salt.

Tomatoes

They contain vitamins C and A but, more importantly, lycopene, an antioxidant that helps guard against damage to DNA in blood cells that can also lead to cancer.

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Pasta

Wholegrain contains more roughage and tastes better.

Seaweed

Chop it up and add to broths and noodle dishes so that it almost disappears, leaving just the flavour and nutrients – calcium, magnesium, potassium, iron and iodine. Also available dried so can easily be stored.

Brown Rice Miso

This is a soya bean based food. Try a spoonful mixed with a pint of hot water gives the base for a great soup or can fortify a hearty stew.

Cold-Pressed Rapeseed Oil

This contains half the saturated fat levels of olive oil and has high levels of omega 3, 6 and 9. It's also a good source of vitamin E, and its elegant nutty flavour makes it perfect for dressings or pasta.

Fresh Herbs

The most useful are flat parsley, coriander, chives and basil.

Pearl Barley

Mix with rice in a risotto or works well in salads too.

Sundried Tomato Paste

If you don't have time to make a pasta sauce, just add a little rapeseed oil and a couple of teaspoons of this great paste to warm pasta.

Spices

Spice up your food, with cumin, coriander seeds, cardamom, chilli and turmeric.

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Quinoa

Packed with nutrients, and more goodness than cous cous. It takes 15 minutes to prepare by boiling and forms a great base for hot dishes and salads alike. Try it instead of pasta.

Passata

A must for tomato-based sauces. Choose the natural type, and add your own touches such as fresh basil or parsley, chilli or garlic. Served with pasta it makes a very fast meal.

Broccoli/Purple Sprouting

Another great anti-cancer super food. It's so rich in vitamins that it beats oranges! Best eaten steamed or raw.

Lentils

Puy lentils are best as they have a great taste and don't split apart when cooked.