



urple has always been powerful. The color of royalty and spiritual leaders, it has a long and storied history, first tinting the robes of ancient kings and queens around the 6th century B.C., then Roman magistrates and Catholic priests. The earliest dyes were painstakingly extracted from sea snails, making purple so rare and expensive that it became a symbol of status. (Some rulers even forbade citizens from wearing the color under penalty of death.)

But to us at *Eating Well*, purple's prestige has to do with what it brings to our *plates*. Plummy-hued produce—from cold-weather cabbage and cauliflower to spring's first artichokes and asparagus—owe their color to anthocyanins, natural plant pigments (as opposed to snails) that can show up in various shades of purple, black, blue and red. Those anthocyanins not only imbue intense color, they also act as potent antioxidants that have been shown to reduce inflammation in the body and help ward off myriad diseases, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, metabolic syndrome, hypertension, gastrointestinal issues and cognitive decline.

"Anthocyanins are the most versatile compound in terms of human health," says Mary Ann Lila, Ph.D., director of the Plants for Human Health Institute, a research center at North Carolina State University. "Others, like carotenoids or glucosinolates, are recognized for benefits against one chronic disease, or a narrow spectrum of conditions. But anthocyanins have demonstrated efficacy against an extremely broad range of health impediments." (More on that in the coming pages.)

With benefits like this, no wonder more and more purple produce is cropping up at the market. And these aren't novel varieties, either, "We're actually going back to what vegetables used to look like, when purple carrots and potatoes were the norm," adds Lila. "We bred the color out of them, going back many hundreds of years, to remove more pungent flavors, and make them mild and sweet. Now, it's so exciting to see the return of this vibrant color, because it has a wilder flavor." (Anthocyanins give food a slight bitterness.)

So if you've only been color-spotting for lush greens, it's time to switch it up with some violet-colored veg. Take a look at the extraordinary health perks, as well as recipes and cooking tips to help you harness the power of purple. PURPLE POWER SLAW, P.78

GERMAN-STYLE PURPLE POTATO SALAD, P.78



ROASTED PURPLE CARROTS WITH BLACK SESAME DUKKAH, P.78

Boost Your Microbiome

Eating ample high-fiber fruits and veggies is important for overall G.I. health, but those that are also rich in anthocyanins appear to be especially beneficial. According to a new review of studies published in the *Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics*, the phytonutrient Significantly bumps up levels of *Bifidobacterium*—a type of good gut bacteria that's widely used in probiotics and has been shown to help conditions like irritable bowel syndrome. It also crowds out gut bugs that are known to be harmful.

Roasted Purple Carrots with Black Sesame Dukkah

ACTIVE: 15 min TOTAL: 40 min We love how the Egyptian nut, seed and spice blend dukkah adds aroma, flavor and texture to this otherwise simple dish. (Photo: page 77.)

- 2 pounds purple carrots, halved or quartered lengthwise, if large
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled
- 3 sprigs fresh thyme
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1/4 teaspoon salt plus 1/8 teaspoon, divided
- 1/4 cup finely chopped unsalted pistachios
- 1 tablespoon black sesame seeds
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or foil.

2. Place carrots, garlic and thyme on the prepared pan. Drizzle with 2 tablespoons oil and season with ¼ teaspoon salt; toss to coat. Roast until the carrots are tender but not browned, 25 to 30 minutes. Discard the thyme.

3. Meanwhile, to prepare dukkah: Heat a small skillet over low heat. Add pistachios, sesame seeds, coriander, cumin and the remaining $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon salt; cook, stirring constantly, until warm and fragrant, 2 to 4 minutes. Remove from heat.

4. Arrange the carrots and garlic on a platter. Drizzle with the remaining 1 tablespoon oil and sprinkle with the dukkah. Serve warm. SERVES 6: about 1 cup each

Cal 160 Fat 10g (sat 1g) Chol Omg Carbs 16g Total sugars 7g (added 0g) Protein 3g Fiber 5g Sodium 240mg Potassium 496mg.

German-Style Purple Potato Salad

ACTIVE: 30 min TOTAL: 40 min Steamed potatoes are usually the base of this German staple, but here the roasted potatoes add another layer of flavor. (Photo: page 76.)

- 2 pounds purple potatoes, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 tablespoons canola or avocado oil
- ½ teaspoon salt, divided
- 1/4 teaspoon ground pepper, plus more to taste
- 4 slices bacon, chopped
- 1/2 cup finely chopped red onion
- ¹/₄ cup cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons whole-grain mustard
- 1 cup sliced celery

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.

Toss potatoes in a large bowl with oil, ¼ teaspoon salt and pepper. Transfer to a large rimmed baking sheet. Roast, stirring once, until tender and browned, 20 to 25 minutes.
Meanwhile, cook bacon in a medium skillet over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until crisp, 5 to 7 minutes. Transfer with a slotted spoon to a paper-towel-lined plate. Add onion, vinegar and mustard to the pan. Cook, stirring constantly and scraping up the browned bits, for 1 minute. Remove from heat.

4. Transfer the potatoes to a large bowl and drizzle with the dressing; stir to combine. Add celery and the bacon and toss to coat. Season with the remaining ¹/₄ teaspoon salt and more pepper to taste.

SERVES 10: ²/₃ cup each

Cal 129 Fat 4g (sat 1g) Chol 4mg Carbs 17g Total sugars 1g (added 0g) Protein 3g Fiber 1g Sodium 245mg Potassium 61mg.

Purple Power Slaw with Sesame-Ginger Vinaigrette

ACTIVE: 35 min TOTAL: 35 min

Combining a trio of purple vegetables—cabbage, carrots and daikon—makes for a stunning slaw. It would be equally delicious tossed with a classic creamy dressing. (Photo: page 76.)

- 1/4 cup toasted sesame oil
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 1¹/₂ tablespoons reduced-sodium tamari or soy sauce
 - 1 tablespoon honey
 - 1 tablespoon grated peeled fresh ginger
 - 1 clove garlic, grated
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 4 cups thinly sliced purple cabbage
- 1 large purple carrot, cut into matchsticks
- 1 small purple daikon, peeled and cut into matchsticks
- 4 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro, divided
- 4 tablespoons sliced scallions, divided
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds

Whisk oil, vinegar, tamari (or soy sauce), honey, ginger, garlic and salt in a large bowl. Add cabbage, carrot, daikon and 3 tablespoons each cilantro and scallions; toss to coat. Serve the slaw topped with sesame seeds and the remaining 1 tablespoon each cilantro and scallions.

SERVES 8: about 3/4 cup each

Cal 96 Fat 8g (sat 1g) Chol Omg Carbs 6g Total sugars 4g (added 2g) Protein 1g Fiber 1g Sodium 218mg Potassium 112mg.

Coconut Black Rice Bowls with Tofu & Purple Asparagus

ACTIVE: 35 min TOTAL: 1 hr

Beyond produce, black beans, black rice and black sesame seeds all contain anthocyanins. So "forbidden" rice isn't just striking, it's also a serious nutrition upgrade. Simmering it in coconut milk adds rich aroma and flavor.

- 3 tablespoons avocado or peanut oil, divided
- 1 tablespoon minced lemongrass
- 3 teaspoons minced garlic, divided
- 1 cup black rice
- 1 15-ounce can light coconut milk
- ⅓ cup water
- ³/₄ teaspoon salt, divided
- 2 tablespoons toasted sesame oil
- 2 tablespoons reduced-sodium tamari or soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon packed light brown sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1 14-ounce package extra-firm water-packed tofu
- 1 pound purple asparagus, trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 tablespoon grated peeled fresh ginger
- 1/2 cup unsweetened shredded coconut
- 1 tablespoon lime juice, plus lime wedges for serving
- 1 teaspoon black sesame seeds
- 3 scallions, sliced
 - Opal basil leaves & thinly sliced purple daikon for garnish

1. Heat 1 tablespoon avocado (or peanut) oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add lemongrass and 1 teaspoon garlic and cook, stirring often, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add rice and stir to coat. Stir in coconut milk, water and ½ teaspoon salt. Bring to a simmer over high heat. Reduce heat to maintain a simmer, cover and cook until the rice is tender and the liquid has been absorbed, 35 to 45 minutes.

 Meanwhile, whisk sesame oil, tamari (or soy sauce), brown sugar and crushed red pepper in a small bowl. Drain tofu and cut into 2-by-1½-inch slabs. Place between paper towels and press to remove excess moisture.
Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons avocado (or peanut) oil in a large cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat. Add the tofu and cook, flipping once, until golden and crispy, 8 to 10 minutes total. Remove to a plate and sprinkle with the remaining ¼ teaspoon salt. Add asparagus, ginger and the remaining 2 teaspoons garlic to the pan; cook, stirring, until the asparagus is tender-crisp, about 3

Fend Off Cancer

A recent Finnish study discovered that anthocyanins increase levels of an enzyme that tamps down the expression of certain cancer genes, inhibiting cancer cells from forming and also from proliferating. (Interestingly, the same enzyme is also linked to improved blood sugar levels.) The researchers are now scrutinizing the pigment to develop preventive drugs and improve treatments for current cancer patients.

COCONUT BLACK RICE BOWLS WITH TOFU & PURPLE ASPARAGUS

Get More Bang for Your Bite

While raw purple végetables refain the brightest and prettiest color, cooking them actually increases the amount of anthocyanins your body is able to absorb: "Heat releases the phytochemicals, versus your body having to digest them first," says NC State's Mary Ann Lila. (Just avoid boiling them to death, or you'll end up with khaki vegetables and a pot full of blue water. Steaming, roasting or sautéing is fine.) minutes. Remove from heat. Whisk the sauce and add to the pan along with the tofu; gently stir to coat.

4. Stir coconut and lime juice into the rice. Top the rice with the tofu mixture, sesame seeds and scallions. Serve with lime wedges and garnish with basil and daikon, if desired. **SERVES 4:** 1% cups each

Cal 577 Fat 37g (sat 14g) Chol Omg Carbs 50g Total sugars 7g (added 3g) Protein 18g Fiber 8g Sodium 815mg Potassium 189mg.

Shaved Purple Artichoke & Asparagus Pizza with Lemon & Pecorino

ACTIVE: 25 min TOTAL: 25 min Shiso is a fuzzy-leafed herb in the mint family that's used in a variety of Asian cuisines. Devoted fans grow it in their gardens; look for it at Asian and farmers' markets. Note: Baby artichokes hardly have chokes, so you can use a paring knife to extricate any fluff.

- 1 tablespoon cornmeal
- 1 pound whole-wheat pizza dough, at room temperature
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 2 cloves garlic, sliced
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
- 1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1¹/₂ cups shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese
- 2 baby purple artichokes
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 8 ounces purple asparagus, trimmed
- 2 ounces shaved pecorino cheese
- (½ cup) ¼ teaspoon ground pepper
- Purple shiso leaves for serving

Punch Up the Pigment

"The deeper and darker the color, the more powerful the health benefits," says Lila. (Though all of it is good!) An almost-black eggplant, for example, contains up to 75 times more anthocyanins than a bright red apple.



1. Position rack in lower third of oven; preheat to 450°F. Sprinkle a baking sheet with cornmeal.

2. Roll out dough on a lightly floured surface into a 12-inch oval. Transfer to the prepared pan and brush with 1 tablespoon oil. Sprinkle the dough with garlic, ¼ teaspoon salt and crushed red pepper, then top with mozzarella. Bake until bubbling and golden brown, 12 to 15 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, snap the tough outer leaves off artichokes and cut off the top two-thirds, down to the heart. Peel the tough stem. Cut the artichokes in half and remove any fuzzy choke. Thinly slice the artichokes and toss in a bowl with lemon juice. Shave asparagus into long strips using a vegetable peeler; thinly slice what can't be shaved. Add the asparagus to the bowl along with pecorino, pepper, the remaining 1 tablespoon oil and ½ teaspoon salt; toss to coat.

4. Top the pizza with the vegetables and sprinkle with lemon zest and shiso, if using. **SERVES 5:** 1 slice each

Cal 403 Fat 20g (sat 7g) Chol 33mg Carbs 41g Total sugars 3g (added 0g) Protein 19g Fiber 3g Sodium 706mg Potassium 162mg.

Sumac Chicken Thighs with Purple Cauliflower

ACTIVE: 25 min TOTAL: 3 hrs (including 2 hrs marinating time) TO MAKE AHEAD: Marinate chicken (Step 1) overnight.

Cauliflower has gone full technicolor, leaping from white to bright orange, neon green and you guessed it—purple. The chicken in this recipe gets its hue from a marinade that's seasoned with tangy sumac. (Photo: page 75.)

- 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons ground sumac
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 3/4 teaspoon salt, divided
- 2 pounds bone-in chicken thighs, trimmed
- 1 2-pound head purple cauliflower, cut into florets (8 cups)
- 1 medium red onion, cut into ½-inch wedges
- ¹/₂ cup labneh (see Tip, page 83) or whole-milk plain Greek yogurt
- 2 tablespoons pine nuts, toasted
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley

JENNIFER CAUSEY; STYLING

MER (FOOD), CLAIRE SPOL

BLACKBERRY & BLUEBERRY CAKE BARS

1. Whisk 2 tablespoons oil, lemon juice, garlic, sumac, cumin and ¼ teaspoon salt in a medium bowl. Add chicken and turn to coat. Cover and marinate in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours or overnight. 2. Position racks in center and lower third of oven. Place a rimmed baking sheet on the lower rack and preheat to 400°F 3. Place cauliflower and onion on another. rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle with the remaining 2 tablespoons oil and season with the remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt; toss to coat. Remove the chicken from the marinade (discard the remaining marinade) and place, skin-side down, on the preheated pan; return to the lower rack. Place the vegetables on the center rack. Roast, turning the chicken and stirring the vegetables halfway through, until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest part without touching bone registers 165°F and the vegetables are tender, 25 to 35 minutes. 4. Smear labneh (or yogurt) on a serving platter and top with the chicken and vegetables. Drizzle with any juices from the chicken and sprinkle with pine nuts and parsley. SERVES 4: 3 oz. chicken & 11/2 cups vegetables each

Cal 567 Fat 39g (sat 9g) Chol 177mg Carbs 18g Total sugars 7g (added 0g) Protein 39g Fiber 6g, Sodium 653mg, Potassium 1,203mg.

TIP: To make labneh, line a large sieve with 4 layers of cheesecloth. Set it over a deep bowl leaving at least 3 inches of space below it. Whisk 4 cups whole-milk plain yogurt with ¼ tsp. salt; spoon into the cheesecloth. Refrigerate until at least 1 cup of liquid has drained out, 12 to 24 hours. (Discard liquid.) Refrigerate labneh for up to 1 week.

Support a Healthy Heart

Anthocyanins have been shown to relax blood vessels and reduce blood pressure, as well as lower the risk of clotting. A recent King's College London study found that volunteers who had a drink containing the equivalent of about 1½ cups of blueberries daily (berries in general are a particularly good source of anthocyanins) saw their blood pressure drop by 5 mmHg—results similar to those from blood-pressure-lowering medications. Blood vessel function also improved just 2 hoursiafter ingestion, and the benefit lasted for up to a month afterward.

Blackberry & Blueberry Cake Bars

ACTIVE: 15 min TOTAL: 1 hr TO MAKE AHEAD: Store airtight at room temperature for up to 2 days. These incredibly easy-to-make bars get a touch of sparkle and crunch from a sprinkle of turbinado sugar over the top. If you use frozen berries, thaw and pat them dry before topping the batter with them.

- 2 teaspoons unsalted butter
 - plus 4 tablespoons, at room temperature, divided
- ¹/₂ cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup white whole-wheat flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup low-fat milk
- 1 cup fresh blackberries
- 1 cup fresh blueberries
- 1/4 cup finely chopped almonds
- 2 tablespoons turbinado sugar

 Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat a 9-inchsquare baking pan with 2 teaspoons butter.
Beat the remaining 4 tablespoons butter, granulated sugar and oil in a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, or with a hand mixer, until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Beat in egg and vanilla until smooth.

3. Whisk flour, baking powder and salt in a medium bowl. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and mix until halfway combined. Add milk and mix just until combined. Do not overmix.

4. Spread the batter in the prepared pan. Sprinkle blackberries and blueberries over the top and lightly press them into the batter. Sprinkle with almonds and turbinado sugar.

5. Bake until puffed and golden and a toothplck inserted into the center comes out clean, 40 to 45 minutes.

6. Let cool slightly, then cut into 9 squares. SERVES 9: 1 square each

Cal 257 Fat 14g (sat 5g) Chol 37mg Carbs 30g Total sugars 17g (added 14g) Protein 4g Fiber 3g Sodium 185mg Potassium 110mg 🛎

BECKY DUFFETT is a writer, editor and recipe developer based in San Francisco, Her work has also appeared in Taste, Healthyish, The Kitchn, Eater SF and Edible San Francisco.