

Focus on

SEEDS

Make flavoursome and nutritious seeds the secret weapon in your kitchen storecupboard

WHICH TO BUY?

Buy whole raw seeds as these will stay fresher for longer than chopped or toasted seeds. Processed seeds are often more expensive, and more likely to contain additional oil and salt, so it's cheaper and healthier to toast seeds at home when you need them.

HOW TO STORE

Keep seeds in an airtight container in the fridge once opened, as their high fat content means they can spoil quickly. You can freeze them too. Just pop them in a sealable freezer bag and freeze for up to 3 months.

HOW TO COOK

Seeds can be toasted in a dry frying pan on a low heat for a few minutes until they start to pop, or in the oven at gas 4, 180°C, fan 160°C for 5-10 minutes. Just make sure to keep an eye on them as they can easily burn.

PUMPKIN SEEDS

These green seeds are best toasted to enhance their nutty flavour. They're ideal for topping soups and salads, and are high in minerals such as zinc, which supports the normal function of the immune system. **TRY IT** Mix with breadcrumbs to add bulk to burgers. Or use in a crispy coating for fish and chicken.

FLAXSEEDS

Otherwise known as linseeds, flaxseeds come in brown and golden varieties. They are high in fibre per 100g, so good for digestive health. It's recommended to grind flaxseeds before eating, as they are more easily digested than when whole. Simply pop them in an airtight bag and crush with a rolling pin. **TRY IT** Grind, then mix through your favourite yogurt; top with fresh fruit and honey.

SUNFLOWER SEEDS

A popular snack in lots of countries, sunflower seeds have a mild flavour and firm bite. They are high in vitamin E per 100g, an antioxidant that supports the protection of cells from oxidative stress (an imbalance between free radicals and antioxidants). **TRY IT** Blitz into pesto with fresh basil, garlic, olive oil and a little lemon juice.

POPPY SEEDS

These blue-black seeds have a crunchy texture and aromatic flavour, so work well in baked goods such as breads and cakes. They're also high in fibre and a source of vitamins B1 and B6 per 100g. **TRY IT** Brush bread dough with beaten egg, then sprinkle on poppy seeds before baking.

SESAME SEEDS

Commonly used in Middle Eastern and Far Eastern cooking, sesame seeds work well in both sweet and savoury recipes (such as brittle and houmous). The seeds can also be ground into a paste to make tahini, or pressed into oil. **TRY IT** Marinate salmon in soy sauce, ginger and garlic, then sprinkle over sesame seeds and bake until cooked through.

CHIA SEEDS

Chia seeds act as a thickener as they're able to absorb large amounts of water, so they can be used in vegan baking in place of eggs. They are also high in calcium per 100g, which supports normal blood clotting and maintenance of normal bones. **TRY IT** For a chocolate chia seed pudding, mix chia seeds with milk, cocoa powder and honey. Chill overnight, then top with blueberries.

COOK'S TIP

Although rich in healthy fats and other nutrients, seeds are high in calories, so stick to the recommended portion size of about 25g a day

DIY spicy seed mix

Preheat the oven to gas 4, 180°C, fan 160°C. Toss 150g mixed seeds in a bowl with 1 tsp ground cumin, 1 tsp smoked paprika, a pinch of cayenne pepper, a pinch of sea salt and 4 tsp olive oil. Line a baking tray with baking paper, add the seeds and bake for 5-10 mins until golden and toasted. Leave to cool before serving, then enjoy as a snack or on top of savoury dishes.