The Surprising Benefits of Seaweed

November 7, 2019

If you find yourself growing a bit bored of those crispy kale chips and leafy greens, try shaking things up with seaweed – it's equally nutritious and delicious!

If you're new to the seaweed game, registered dietitian Amanda A. Kostro Miller of Smart Healthy Living says that you'll want to keep in mind that there are different types of seaweed that boast different nutritional benefits. "There are

lots of different types of seaweed out there, and they come in all different forms (fresh, powdered, and pickled)," she says.

To break down all the nutritional benefits of seaweed and what kind of seaweed to actually eat, we spoke to experts about everything you need to know about this popular food ingredient.

Types of seaweed

There are a few different options to try if you're a seaweed first-timer. "Nori is a popular type of seaweed you'll easily find in the grocery store," says registered dietitian Brenna O'Malley. This is a type of red seaweed, she explains, that you can find sold in thin, salty, and crispy sheets. Nori is also the type of seaweed that wraps your sushi roll.

Kelp is also worth looking into. "The most notable benefit of seaweed is its iodine content, which is vital for thyroid function," says certified nutritionist Ariane Resnick, author of *How to Be Well When You're Not*. Kelp tends to have the highest amount of iodine out of all seaweeds, she adds, and is also one of the two main ingredients in dashi, a Japanese soup stock used in miso soup.

Contains essential minerals and fatty acids

"Seaweed is very high in manganese, folate, potassium, vitamin K (a nutrient needed for good natural blood

clotting), and magnesium," Kostro Miller explains. And if you're looking to improve your omega-3 fatty acid intake, she says seaweed is a great way for vegans (and non-vegans) to pump up their DHA levels.

Boasts immune-boosting benefits

With cold and flu season approaching fast, celebrity chef and nutritionist [Serena Poon](#) suggests that consuming seaweed regularly can actually rev up your immunity because of its detoxifying effect on the body. "Full of immune-boosting minerals (such as calcium, zinc, and iron), seaweed fuels our bodies with the ability to help regulate and detox our blood and lymphatic system," Poon says.

Protects your skin

"The vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants inside seaweed work to protect our skin as well," Poon suggests. "This includes protecting the skin against free-radical damage, dehydration, sun damage, and inflammation." Additionally, Poon explains that the rich vitamin C content in seaweed also provides the added beauty benefit of supporting collagen production, which keeps your skin looking healthy.

Makes a great addition or substitute for your favorite foods

Seaweed is also filled with delicious flavor. Poon explains that its distinctive and comforting umami taste can easily amplify the flavor of any dish of your choosing. "Seaweed is

an easy addition to soups, salads, and Buddha bowls," she suggests. You can also use it as a delicious and nutrient-dense wrap.

"Seawood also provides a fiber-rich alternative to carb-heavy noodles and pasta," Poon says. However, if you prefer your seaweed in snack form, she advises looking for seaweed jerky (yes, really!) and chips to send those midday munchies packing.

xx, The FabFitFun Team