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Nourish your mind, fuel your life. The choices we make every day—from the foods we eat to the way we move, rest, and connect with others—shape the foundation of our brain health. A vibrant, well-balanced diet isn’t just about what’s on your plate; it’s about embracing a lifestyle that supports clarity, energy, and longevity.

By filling your meals with nutrient-rich, brain-loving foods, you’re taking an active role in protecting your memory, focus, and overall well-being. But food is only part of the equation—true wellness comes from movement, purpose, joy, and connection. So savor each bite, stay curious, and live fully—because a nourished brain is the key to a thriving life.



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MIND
THE GULF



INTRODUCTION

The MIND diet (Mediterranean-DASH Diet Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay) is a dietary approach designed to promote brain health and reduce the risk of cognitive decline. It combines elements of two well-researched diets:

- **The Mediterranean Diet**, known for its heart-healthy benefits.
- **The DASH Diet** (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension), designed to lower blood pressure.

The MIND diet selectively incorporates components of these diets that have been shown to support cognitive function. It emphasizes whole grains, berries, leafy greens, vegetables, olive oil, poultry, and fish while limiting foods that may negatively impact brain health.

The Science Behind Brain-Healthy Eating

As we age, our brains become increasingly vulnerable to damage and cognitive decline. Researchers at Rush University Medical Center developed the MIND diet in 2015 to examine how food choices influence brain health. The diet aims to:

- Slow cognitive decline associated with aging.
- Reduce the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

Although the MIND diet is relatively new, early evidence suggests it has significant protective effects on cognitive function. Multiple studies have linked adherence to the MIND diet with a lower risk of dementia, slower cognitive decline, and better overall brain health.

INGREDIENTS:

- 8 ounces green tea or matcha tea (hot)
- 1 scoop (500 milligrams) NMN powder
- 1 scoop (5 grams) creatine monohydrate
- ½ teaspoon raw honey or monk fruit sweetener (optional, for taste)
- ½ teaspoon MCT oil or coconut oil (for sustained mental energy)

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Brew green tea or matcha tea and allow it to steep for 3-5 minutes.
- Stir in NMN, creatine while the tea is still warm.
- Add honey or monk fruit sweetener if desired.
- Stir in MCT oil or coconut oil to improve brain energy metabolism.
- Stir well, sip, and enjoy at least 30 minutes before coffee or breakfast for optimal results.

Emerald Tea



How Does the MIND Diet WORK?

The MIND diet specifically tailors food choices to optimize cognitive function and reduce neuroinflammation.

- **Antioxidants:** Found in berries, leafy greens, and nuts, these combat oxidative stress, a major contributor to brain aging.
- **Anti-inflammatory effects:** Omega-3 fatty acids and polyphenols reduce neuroinflammation
- **Improved vascular health:** Whole grains, nuts, and olive oil help maintain healthy blood flow to the brain.
- **Neuroprotection:** Certain nutrients like vitamin E and flavonoids support neuronal integrity and function.



Key Differences Between THE DIETS

Compared to such diets as the Mediterranean Diet, the DASH diet, Ketogenic Diet and other Fad Diets, the MIND diet prioritizes foods known to support brain function and differs in several ways:

✓ Higher emphasis on brain-specific nutrients:

- Omega-3 fatty acids from fatty fish (salmon, tuna, sardines).
- Flavonoids and antioxidants from blueberries, dark chocolate, red wine, kale, and citrus fruits.
- Vitamin E from olive oil, nuts, and leafy greens.

✓ Greater focus on green, leafy vegetables as distinct from other vegetables due to their strong links to reduced cognitive decline.

✓ Encourages moderate consumption of wine (preferably red) due to its polyphenol content, which has been associated with neuroprotection.

✓ More restrictive regarding “unhealthy” foods:

- Limits butter and margarine (less than 1 tbsp per day).
- Limits cheese, and sweets to occasional consumption.
- Encourages whole grains instead of refined carbohydrates.

What Foods to Eat on the MIND Diet?

The MIND diet emphasizes brain-healthy foods while limiting those that contribute to inflammation and oxidative stress.

Foods to Include (Encouraged for Brain Health)

- Green leafy vegetables (Spinach, kale, collard greens)
- Other vegetables (Carrots, tomatoes, bell peppers)
- Berries (Blueberries, strawberries, blackberries)
- Nuts (Almonds, walnuts, cashews)
- Whole grains (Brown rice, quinoa, whole wheat bread)
- Fish (Salmon, tuna, mackerel)
- Poultry (Chicken, turkey)
- Olive oil (Used as a primary cooking oil)
- Beans and legumes (Chickpeas, lentils, black beans)
- Wine (One glass per day, optional)

Foods to Limit (Associated with Cognitive Decline)

- Red meats (Beef, pork, lamb)
- Butter and margarine (Limit to less than a tablespoon per day)
- Cheese (Limit to once per week)
- Fried and fast foods (Limit to once per week)
- Pastries and sweets (Limit to once per week)

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup milk (dairy or plant-based: almond, oat, or coconut)
- ½ teaspoon turmeric powder
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg (optional, for relaxation)
- 1 teaspoon honey or maple syrup (optional, for sweetness)
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon coconut oil or ghee (for better absorption of turmeric)
- 1 pinch black pepper (enhances turmeric absorption)

Optional for Moon Milk:

- ¼ teaspoon ashwagandha powder (for stress relief)
- ¼ teaspoon dried lavender (for relaxation)

INSTRUCTIONS:

- In a small saucepan, warm the milk over low heat (do not boil).
- Whisk in turmeric, cinnamon, nutmeg, vanilla, coconut oil/ghee, and black pepper.
- If using, add ashwagandha and lavender for a Moon Milk variation.
- Simmer for 5 minutes, whisking occasionally.
- Strain (if using lavender), then stir in honey or maple syrup.
- Pour into a mug and enjoy warm before bedtime.

A close-up photograph of a ceramic mug filled with a thick, yellow-orange beverage, likely Golden Moon Milk. The mug is speckled and sits on a rustic wooden slice. Two cinnamon sticks and a star anise are placed next to the mug. The background is softly blurred, showing warm, bokeh lights.

Golden Moon Milk



New Orleans & Louisiana-Inspired MIND Diet Recipes

New Orleans is famous for its rich culinary heritage, blending French, Spanish, African, and Creole influences to create bold, flavorful dishes. While traditional Louisiana cuisine often includes buttery sauces, fried foods, and processed ingredients, adapting these recipes to fit the MIND diet allows you to enjoy local flavors while prioritizing brain health.

The MIND diet focuses on whole, nutrient-dense foods, including leafy greens, berries, nuts, whole grains, fish, poultry, and olive oil, while limiting red meat, fried foods, butter, cheese, and sweets. These adaptations maintain the essence of New Orleans cuisine while incorporating healthier ingredients to support cognitive function.

In the following section, you'll find Louisiana-inspired dishes that align with the MIND diet. Each recipe maintains the bold flavors of Louisiana cuisine while using heart-healthy oils, fresh herbs, lean proteins, and fiber-rich vegetables. Whether you're a lifelong local or a visitor looking to bring Creole and Cajun flair into a brain-healthy lifestyle, these meals make it easy to enjoy the taste of New Orleans while following the MIND diet!

BON APPÉTIT!



Blackened Salmon

with Sautéed Spinach &
Roasted Sweet Potatoes



INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound broccoli florets
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon freshly grated ginger
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds
- Optional: 1 teaspoon honey or maple syrup for a touch of sweetness
- Optional: 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes for heat

INSTRUCTIONS:

- **Preheat Oven:** Set your oven to 425°F
- **Prepare Broccoli:** Wash and dry th broccoli florets thoroughly. Place them in a large mixing bowl.
- **Make the dressing:** In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, sesame oil, soy sauce, grated ginger, minced garlic, and honey or maple syrup if using. For added spice, incorporate red pepper flakes.
- **Toss Broccoli:** Pour the dressing over the broccoli florets. Toss until each piece is evenly coated.
- **Arrange on Baking Sheet:** Spread the dressed broccoli in a single layer on a parchment-lined baking sheet to ensure even roasting.
- **Roast:** Place the baking sheet in the preheated oven and roast for 15-20 minutes, or until the broccoli edges turn crispy and golden brown.
- **Add Sesame Seeds:** About 5 minutes before the broccoli is done, sprinkle the sesame seeds over the florets. This allows them to toast lightly without burning.
- **Serve:** Once roasted, remove the broccoli from the oven. Transfer to a serving dish and enjoy warm.



Sesame Ginger Roasted Broccoli



INGREDIENTS

For the Seared Tuna:

- 1 medium sweet potato, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

For the Blackened Salmon:

- 2 salmon fillets (6 ounces each)
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper (adjust to taste)
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Lemon wedges, for serving

For the Sautéed Spinach:

- 2 cups fresh baby spinach
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

NOTES:

- For a milder flavor, reduce the amount of cayenne pepper in the blackening spice mix.
- Ensure your kitchen is well-ventilated when searing the fish, as the spices can produce smoke.
- This dish pairs well with a simple green salad or steamed vegetables for a more substantial meal.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Roast the Sweet Potatoes:

- Preheat your oven to 400°F (200°C).
- In a bowl, toss the sweet potato cubes with olive oil, paprika, salt, and pepper until evenly coated.
- Spread the sweet potatoes on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper in a single layer.
- Roast in the preheated oven for 20-25 minutes, turning halfway through, until tender and lightly browned.

Prepare the Blackened Salmon:

- In a small bowl, combine the paprika, cayenne pepper, garlic powder, onion powder, thyme, oregano, salt, and black pepper.
- Pat the salmon fillets dry with paper towels. Brush both sides with olive oil.
- Generously coat the flesh side of each fillet with the spice mixture, pressing gently to adhere.
- Heat a large cast-iron skillet or heavy-bottomed pan over medium-high heat. Once hot, add a drizzle of olive oil.
- Place the salmon fillets in the skillet, flesh side down. Sear for 3-4 minutes until a dark crust forms.
- Flip the fillets and cook for an additional 3-4 minutes, or until the salmon reaches your desired level of doneness.

Sauté the Spinach:

- In a separate skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat.
- Add minced garlic and sauté for about 30 seconds until fragrant.
- Add the spinach and cook, stirring frequently, until wilted, approximately 2-3 minutes.
- Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste.

Assemble the Dish:

- On each plate, arrange a portion of sautéed spinach and roasted sweet potatoes.
- Place a salmon fillet on top of the spinach.
- Serve with lemon wedges on the side for squeezing over the salmon.



“Everything” Seared Tuna Steaks

with Coconut Rice &
Wilted Spinach



INGREDIENTS

Greens:

- 1 bunch each collard, mustard, turnip greens;
- 1 bunch spinach, watercress, parsley
- 1 medium cabbage, chopped

Vegetables:

- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 bell pepper, chopped
- 2 celery stalks, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- Brown rice or quinoa

Roux:

- ½ cup olive oil,
- ½ cup whole wheat flour

Liquids & Seasoning:

- 2 quarts low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 tbsp Creole seasoning
- salt & black pepper to taste

Optional Protein:

- 1 lb chicken (cubed, cooked separately)

INSTRUCTIONS:

- **Cook Greens:** Boil chopped greens for 30 minutes, drain, and set aside (reserve some liquid).
- **Make Roux:** Heat oil in a heavy pot, whisk in flour, and cook until light brown (10-15 min), stirring constantly.
- **Sauté Aromatics:** Add onion, bell pepper, celery, and garlic; cook until softened.
- **Combine Ingredients:** Stir in greens, broth, and some reserved liquid; mix well.
- **Season & Simmer:** Add Creole seasoning, salt, and pepper. Simmer uncovered for 45 minutes.
- **Optional Protein:** If using chicken, sauté separately and add in the last 15 minutes.
- **Serve:** Ladle over brown rice or quinoa and enjoy!



Gumbo Z'Herbes

Louisiana-style
Greens Gumbo



INGREDIENTS

For the Seared Tuna:

- 2 ahi tuna steaks
- 2 tablespoons “everything bagel” seasoning
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

For the Coconut Rice:

- 1 cup jasmine rice
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 1 cup water
- ½ teaspoon salt

For the Wilted Spinach:

- 4 cups fresh spinach
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

NOTES:

- For a more pronounced coconut flavor in the rice, consider adding a teaspoon of sugar during cooking.
- Adjust the searing time of the tuna based on your preferred level of doneness.
- Ensure the skillet is adequately heated before adding the tuna to achieve a good sear.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Prepare the Coconut Rice:

- Rinse the jasmine rice under cold water until the water runs clear.
- In a medium saucepan, combine the rinsed rice, coconut milk, water, and salt. Stir to mix.
- Bring the mixture to a boil over medium-high heat. Once boiling, reduce the heat to low, cover, and let simmer for 15 minutes, or until the liquid is absorbed and the rice is tender.
- Remove from heat and let it sit, covered, for an additional 10 minutes. Fluff with a fork before serving.

Sear the Tuna:

- Pat the ahi tuna steaks dry with a paper towel. Season both sides lightly with salt and pepper.
- Spread the “everything bagel” seasoning on a plate. Press each tuna steak into the seasoning, ensuring an even coating on all sides.
- Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Once hot, add the seasoned tuna steaks.
- Sear each side for 1-2 minutes for rare to medium-rare, or longer if preferred. Remove from the skillet and let rest for a few minutes before slicing.

Wilt the Spinach:

- In the same skillet used for the tuna, add a tablespoon of olive oil over medium heat.
- Sauté the minced garlic until fragrant, about 30 seconds.
- Add the spinach and cook, stirring frequently, until wilted, approximately 2-3 minutes.
- Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste.

Assemble the Dish:

- Spoon a serving of coconut rice onto each plate.
- Place a portion of wilted spinach beside the rice.
- Slice the seared tuna steaks and arrange on top of the rice or alongside.
- Serve immediately and enjoy!



Dark Chocolate & Avocado Mousse

with Raspberry Cream



INGREDIENTS

For the Mousse:

- 2 ripe avocados, peeled and pitted
- ¼ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- ¼ cup dark chocolate chips, melted
- ¼ cup maple syrup or agave nectar
- ¼ cup almond milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Pinch of salt

For the Raspberry Cream:

- 1 cup fresh raspberries
- ½ cup chilled coconut cream
- 2 tablespoons powdered sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract

INSTRUCTIONS:

Prepare the Mousse:

- In a blender or food processor, combine the avocados, cocoa powder, melted dark chocolate, maple syrup (or agave nectar), almond milk, vanilla extract, and a pinch of salt. Blend until the mixture is smooth and creamy.
- Taste and adjust sweetness if necessary.
- Divide the mousse into serving dishes and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to allow it to set.

Prepare the Raspberry Cream::

- In a bowl, mash the fresh raspberries with a fork until they reach a slightly chunky consistency.
- In a separate chilled bowl, whip the coconut cream with the powdered sugar and vanilla extract until soft peaks form.
- Gently fold the mashed raspberries into the whipped coconut cream until well combined.

Assemble the Dish:

- Remove the chilled mousse from the refrigerator.
- Top each serving with a generous dollop of the raspberry cream.
- Garnish with additional fresh raspberries or shaved dark chocolate if desired.
- Serve immediately and enjoy this rich, creamy, and fruity dessert.