

## EAT • WISE BE • WELL

### **Soaking Nuts and Seeds: Healthier Protein with Sprouted Seeds**

Nuts and seeds are an excellent protein alternative for those who are trying to eat less meat and they are full of nutrients and the heart healthy monounsaturated fats our bodies need. One of nature's power foods, certain varieties of raw nuts are high in vitamin E, folic acid, calcium, copper, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, and zinc, to name just a few. Nuts are also packed with protein and extremely portable. Did you know that it's possible to make this natural super food even better?

Sadly most of the "raw" nuts sold in North American stores are far from fresh, and far from raw. By the time they hit the shelves they are no longer alive and usually rancid. Almonds from California must be heat pasteurized or chemically treated and can still be labeled as "raw". (Something is just fundamentally wrong with that!)

Truly raw nuts are as much a living food as salad greens or sprouts. Nuts and grains are seeds. The whole food goodness that makes them such a wonderful addition to your diet is because of their properties as viable seed.

Sprouting is a mini miracle when it comes to boosting the health benefits of seeds, nuts and grain. Dormant seeds have enzyme inhibitors, which stop enzyme reactions. This keeps them from sprouting in unfavorable conditions, but it also makes them difficult to digest. Once a seed is sprouted the enzyme inhibitors are gone and the nutrients are readily available. Sprouted seeds also increase in protein while decreasing in carbohydrates as the seed uses the carbohydrate energy stored inside to grow. Soaking also breaks down the glutens and hard to digest proteins into smaller and easier to digest components. Sprouted nuts become more delicious and good for you than raw nuts.

**Equipment.** It's a good idea to sterilize the jar you will use. Wash it in the dishwasher or rinse with boiling water with a bit of food safe hydrogen peroxide, or grape fruit seed extract.

**Rinse and Soak.** Rinse and drain the nuts. Fill a jar with about 1/3 nuts and 2/3 filtered water. Keep the jar out of direct sunlight and allow the nuts to soak. Most nuts should soak for 4-12 hours before draining.

**Drain.** After soaking, drain and rinse the nuts. Once the nuts have soaked they are beginning to germinate and are free of enzyme inhibitors. Eat them now or allow them to sprout longer.

**Restore the crunch.** Unlike some types of seeds, sprouted nuts will not develop a long shoot. They swell rather than sprout tails. Rinse and drain every 8 hours until you are ready to eat them. Store in the refrigerator. You can dehydrate nuts at under 115 degrees to restore the crunchy texture.