

SEEDS AT THE CO-OP

The nutritional profile of different seeds varies, but all are multi-beneficial. Incorporating a variety of seeds into our diet ensures a wide range of benefits. Below is a list of just some of seeds available at our co-op:

SEED	HISTORY and ORIGIN	NUTRITIONAL BENEFITS	WAYS TO EAT
SUNFLOWER SEEDS	<p>The sunflower, a plant with rays of petals springing from its bright yellow, seed-studded center, is native to Central and North America. A truly local food, archeological evidence suggests it was cultivated by indigenous tribes here in present day NM and AZ as early as 3000 BCE.</p>	<p>Sunflower seeds are an excellent source of vitamin E, the body's primary fat-soluble anti-oxidant. Because it neutralizes free radicals, Vitamin E has significant anti-inflammatory effects that can reduce symptoms of asthma and both kinds of arthritis. The magnesium in sun seeds is believed to help lower blood pressure by dilating blood vessels, prevent migraines and muscle cramps as well as reduce the risk of heart attacks and strokes.</p>	<p>A handful of sun seeds make a satisfying snack, either raw or lightly toasted. They can also be added to granola, muesli, salads or even sautéed with seaweed for a mineral-rich side dish.</p>
SESAME SEEDS	<p>Like sunflower seeds, human use of sesame seeds is also ancient, dating back more than 5,000 years. Originating in India and Africa, sesame seeds, also called <i>benne</i>, were brought to North America by Africans who were forced into slavery.</p>	<p>Sesame seeds have high levels of calcium and magnesium. In fact, a quarter cup of sesame seeds has as much calcium as a cup of milk. The copper in sesame seeds is believed to reduce symptoms of arthritis.</p>	<p>Sesame seeds can be eaten as a condiment in the form of Japanese <i>gomasio</i>, in tahini sauces and dressings, and the oil is good for the body as well as cooking. Sesame seeds should be at least partially crushed before eating so that its nutrients are available to us.</p>

<p>FLAX SEEDS (LINSEEDS)</p>	<p>The flax plant is one of the oldest crops, known to have been used by the ancient Egyptians to produce linen. It was brought to the U.S. by colonists for its fiber and oil. While the health benefits of flaxseeds were praised by the ancient Greeks and Romans, the flax plant remained primarily an industrial crop until the 1990s, when nutritionists discovered that flax is an excellent source of omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids.</p>	<p>Almost all (95%) of the carbs in flaxseeds consist of fiber, both soluble and insoluble. Flaxseeds are a natural laxative and promote regularity. Flaxseeds contain protein and 8 essential amino acids. They may also help prevent heart disease and support immune function. Flaxseeds are one of the richest dietary sources of the omega-3 fatty acid ALA. In fact, they are only exceeded by chia seeds.</p>	<p>Flax is another seed that should be crushed before eating. Some people add flax to their smoothies, and vegans make a substitute “egg” by blending 3 T water with 1 T flax seeds.</p>
<p>PUMPKIN SEEDS</p>	<p>Pumpkins are another local food, native to North America. Seeds from related plants have been found in Mexico dating back to 7,000 BCE. Native Americans used pumpkins as a staple in their diets well before European contact.</p>	<p>Pumpkin seeds, also known locally as “pepitas,” are high in complete protein, thought to improve prostate and bladder health, and because they are a rich source of zinc, they may improve sperm quality and contribute to healthy testosterone levels.</p>	<p>Like sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds make a filling snack, raw or toasted.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">CHIA SEEDS</p>	<p>These tiny black seeds come from a member of the mint family, originating in Central and South America, valued by the ancient Aztecs and Mayans.</p>	<p>High in fiber, calcium, and complete protein, chia seeds serve as a digestive aid for many people. Chia seeds are one of the best plant sources of “heart-healthy” omega-3 fatty acids.</p>	<p>Chia seeds are a wonderful thickening agent in the kitchen. Many people make “chia seed pudding” by soaking the seeds in milk overnight, but they can also be used as a thickening agent in soups or stews and also serve as an egg substitute in the same way as flax seeds by blending 1T chia with 3T water.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">HEMP SEEDS</p>	<p>Originally from Central Asia, historically, hemp cultivation has been primarily for fiber. Its use in the U.S. has been marginalized since the 1950s because of its relationship to medicinal varieties of cannabis. Hemp seeds only contain a trace amount of THC, the psychoactive component in marijuana,</p>	<p>When eaten, hemp hearts offer an especially high-quality, complete protein. Hemp seeds are high in omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, known to support heart health.</p>	<p>The flavor of these seeds is nutty, reminiscent of sunflower seeds combined with the creaminess of pine nuts. The seeds sold at the co-op have been hulled and are called “hemp hearts.” They can be sprinkled on cereal, added to granola, made into milk, or even used as a substitute for breadcrumbs for people with gluten sensitivity.</p>

QUINOA	<p>Quinoa, a seed that is treated like a grain, originates in the Andes of South America. Another ancient seed, quinoa was cultivated by the Incas over 5,000 years ago. Quinoa can grow in poor soil with little irrigation and can withstand mild frosts.</p>	<p>Quinoa offers a complete protein. It is gluten-free, high in fiber, magnesium, B vitamins, iron, potassium, calcium, phosphorus, vitamin E and large amounts of flavonoids, including quercetin and kaempferol. These are potent plant antioxidants with anti-inflammatory, anti-viral, anti-cancer and anti-depressant effects.</p>	<p>Quinoa can be cooked just like a grain using a 3:1 ratio. Lightly toasting the seeds before cooking imparts a nutty flavor. Tabouli made with quinoa (instead of bulgur) is fluffy and delicious.</p>
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