

FOR YOUR TABLE

Hemp hearts buzz

This tiny seed is a natural powerhouse

by VICKI SHANTA RETELNY



Hemp has been used to make paper, rope, clothing, boat sails and thousands of other products for centuries. Now, hemp seeds are creating a buzz in health food circles with their stellar bevy of nutrients.

Although they come from the same plant, *Cannabis sativa*, hemp seeds do not have the mind-altering effects of marijuana. Their nutritional profile is where their power lies, and research reveals hemp seeds can help promote health and longevity as a sustainable plant food source, according to a study published in *The Journal of Nutritional Biochemistry*.

Hemp hearts' goodness

The soft inner center of the hemp seed, or the hemp heart, is jam-packed with nourishing goodies, with a healthy ratio of omega-3 and omega-6 fats. The rich fatty acid content can have anti-inflammatory effects, helping the body fend off chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease and certain cancers. These essential fats can also help regulate cholesterol, which may bode well for heart health, as well as hormones, such as estrogen, which can keep hair, skin and nails healthy, too.

Plus, hemp hearts contain many vitamins and minerals, such as vitamin E, a powerful cell-protecting antioxidant, as well as folate, B₆, iron, zinc, potassium, magnesium and manganese.

Hemp hearts have been called a superseed. A single serving (3 tablespoons) of hemp seeds contains 180 calories and 10 grams of protein, including all of the essential amino acids, making it a complete protein source. Plus, hemp seeds are low in carbohydrates, sugar and sodium. They are a satiating addition to a healthy diet, which can help with blood sugar control, as well as weight management or weight loss.

Hemp seeds can be eaten cooked or raw; they have a nutty flavor that some say resembles that of a pine nut, and their creamy, ivory color complements a variety of dishes. The soft exterior of these tiny seeds makes them easy to chew and digest.

These superseeds fit into a variety of eating styles, whether you follow a raw, vegan, vegetarian, pescatarian, Mediterranean, Whole30, paleo or keto diet.



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PHOTOGRAPHY
