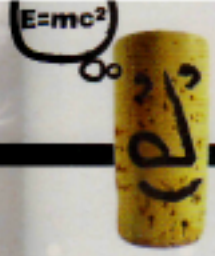


A GLASS OF WINE A FEW TIMES A WEEK IMPROVES YOUR THINKING, A NEW STUDY FINDS.

Nutrition

# Eat This, Stay Sharp

## Research shows berries may protect against mental decline

Glorious blueberries, sweet acai berries, luscious strawberries—new research shows they may boost your aging brain.

As we get older, damaged cells accumulate in the brain, which can lead to age-related diseases such as dementia, Alzheimer's, and Parkinson's. That's where berries come in. Polyphenols, which give berries their deep-red or -blue hue, activate proteins that "clean up" damaged cells, breaking down and recycling the toxic chemicals linked to age-related mental decline, says study author Shibu Poulose, Ph.D., a molecular biologist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging in Boston.

These berried treasures do more than help your mind: Blueberries rank first among fruits for their antioxidant powers, strawberries are tops in vitamin C, and acai berries contain high levels of omega-6 and -9 fatty acids, thought to play a role in cardiovascular health, says nutritionist Robyn Webb, food editor of *Diabetes Forecast* magazine.

So—ready to increase your berry intake? Add them to cereal, purée them into sauces, or just eat them fresh.

—*Monica Bhide*

Recipe

## BERRY PARFAIT

*With Edible Flowers*

**Serves 4**

- 2 cups low-fat plain yogurt
- 3 tablespoons maple syrup (or to taste)
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 1½ cups berries (blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, in any combination)
- 1 tablespoon sugar, optional
- Whipped topping, optional
- Edible flowers for garnish, optional

1. In a bowl, combine the yogurt, maple syrup, and lemon zest. Mix well; refrigerate for 1 hour.
2. Place the berries in a mixing bowl with the sugar, if using, and let stand.
3. When ready to serve, place some of the berries in the bottom of a parfait glass or bowl, top with some of the yogurt, then add more berries, a dollop of yogurt, and the whipped topping. Garnish with edible flowers, if you like.

**NOTE** *Edible flowers—nasturtiums, roses, or violets—are available at Whole Foods and many other grocery chains, but you may have to ask for them.*

**Nutrients per serving** 134 calories, 6g protein, 25g carbohydrates, 2g fiber, 2g fat, 7mg cholesterol, 81mg sodium

FROM TOP: ILLUSTRATION BY PETER HELLMUNDSEN; LISA SHAZAR (FOOD STYLIST); MARGARETTE ADAMS (PROP STYLIST); ANDREW BURGESS; ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTOPH NIEMANN; WINE GLASS: THOMAS STUDIO, INC. NORWAY

CHEW ON THIS

By Brian Wansink, Ph.D.

### HOW MANY CALORIES IN *THAT*?

Most of us drastically underestimate how much we've eaten—sometimes by up to 50 percent—and the bigger the meal, the less accurate our calorie count. Try two easy solutions. One is to guess the calories and then double that number, which is likely to be closer to the truth. The second is to estimate the calories in each item—the sandwich, the chips. Our studies show we're a lot more accurate when we measure smaller amounts of food than when we try to guess the calories in an entire meal.

ATTENTION, FOOD LOVERS

Find more berry recipes, plus tips for eating healthfully, at **aarp.org/food.**