

Can Your Lunch Fight Pollen?



What To Eat During Allergy Season

If seasonal allergies are getting in your way of enjoying the spring, you're not alone. Did you know that over a quarter of adults in America suffer from seasonal allergies (sometimes called hay fever)?

There's an old wives' tale (and some misinformation on social media) that local honey can help with seasonal allergies. Whether it's worked for you or not, there's little proven evidence and conflicting research that it actually helps!

Why?

While hay fever is caused by an immune reaction to pollen in the air, honey mainly comes from flower nectar and doesn't meaningfully expose you to the pollens responsible for allergy symptoms.

So... what are some natural ways to feel better this spring, especially since antihistamines might make you drowsy?

While there's no natural antihistamine, there are several foods you may want to incorporate into your diet more often to help with natural symptom relief.

Diets rich in fruits and vegetables that provide vitamin C and other antioxidants (like citrus fruits, berries, bell peppers and leafy greens) may help lower histamine levels and support the nasal lining during allergy season.

Foods containing quercetin – a flavonoid found in onions, apples, berries and parsley – are thought to help stabilize mast cells, which are responsible for releasing histamine during allergic reactions.

Omega-3 fatty acids from fatty fish, flaxseed and walnuts may further support symptom control by shifting the body away from pro-inflammatory immune signaling, while probiotic-rich foods like yogurt and kefir can help regulate immune responses through the gut-immune connection.

However, there are some foods that might act as a trigger to allergy sufferers, including:

- **Raw fruits and vegetables:** Certain raw produce can cross-react with pollen allergens and cause mouth or throat itching. The produce with birch pollen (raw apples, cherries), ragweed pollen (bananas, cucumbers), and grass pollen (tomatoes, oranges, peaches) may

affect sensitive seasonal allergy sufferers, unlike the citrus and berries that can help.

- **Histamine-rich foods:** Foods high in histamine (like aged cheese and alcohol) can add to the body's histamine load and intensify allergy symptoms in sensitive people.
- **Dairy (for some individuals):** Dairy may increase the sensation of thick mucus or congestion in susceptible people, though effects vary.
- **Highly processed or high-sugar foods:** Ultra-processed foods can promote systemic inflammation, which may worsen allergy symptoms overall.

Whether your allergies need some medical intervention or are just annoying on high-pollen days, the "helpful" food list might introduce some tasty flavors into your diet. Paying attention to personal triggers while emphasizing broadly anti-inflammatory foods can help make allergy season more manageable, even if the effects are subtle. Happy spring and summer!



Kindness is inherently human. From childhood, we are typically hard-wired to show empathy and caring for others. However, it takes practice to nurture kindness into a habit.

Kindness is a gift freely given to others, and an intentional focus on altruism can bring several wellbeing benefits.

Research shows kindness can improve mood, increase self-esteem, promote purpose, lower blood pressure, deepen positive connections with others, support the ability to cope with stress, and even enhance happiness.

HERE ARE A FEW WAYS TO INTENTIONALLY EXTEND KINDNESS:

Be kind to ourselves with SELF-COMPASSION. The way we talk to ourselves can shape how we feel and how we experience everyday moments.

- Each day brings fun and tough moments. Choose to talk kindly to yourself during all kinds of experiences. For example, during tough moments, remind yourself, "I am trying."
- Think about three things you appreciate about yourself or your life at this very moment.
- Think about three things that make you smile or relax.

Extend EMPATHY toward family and friends.

- Observe someone's facial expressions during a conversation to understand how they are feeling.
- Before sharing something with someone, try asking, "Is this a good time?" or, "Are you available?"
- We can always say, "I'm sorry," to take responsibility for our actions or words.

Being kind takes a great deal of COURAGE.

- Don't be afraid to speak up when someone is being unkind. Consider options like, "I don't agree with that," or, "That isn't a kind thing to do."
- Consider someone you feel is different than you or someone you tend to disagree with. Think of the ways you are the same and notice how you feel. It takes courage to accept our family and friends for who they are without trying to change, judge or even avoid them.
- Find forgiveness when someone upsets you. Remind yourself, "No one is perfect." You might try envisioning a cloud moving across the sky, whisking away any anger with it.

These categories are instrumental elements of kindness. Small steps in each of these directions, each day, can make a tremendous shift in every one of us for a kinder world and help us keep in touch with our true, shining human nature.

Vegan BARBECUE JACKFRUIT Sandwiches

Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 30 minutes Serves: 8

For the Barbecue Jackfruit:

- 2 cans young green jackfruit in water or brine (not in syrup)
- 1 white or yellow onion, sliced thin
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ teaspoon each: paprika and cumin
- 1 teaspoon each: chili powder and garlic powder
- 1-2 cups barbecue sauce of choice
- 8 buns of choice

For the coleslaw:

- 4 cups shredded cabbage, or one bag
- 1 shredded carrot
- ½-1 teaspoon maple syrup
- 2 teaspoons apple cider vinegar
- ¼ cup vegan mayonnaise
- Pinch of salt and pepper, to taste

1. Prep the coleslaw by mixing together the ingredients and seasoning to taste. Cover and chill in the fridge until ready to serve.
2. Sauté the onion slices in a tablespoon or two of olive oil in a large pan over medium high heat until the onion is fairly soft and translucent.
3. Drain and rinse the jackfruit. Remove from the can and slice the jackfruit from the core to the end, lengthwise.
4. Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and cook for about 5 minutes, until just becoming browned. Next, add the jackfruit and cook for another minute or two. Then, add the paprika, cumin, chili powder and garlic powder.
5. Using a potato masher, mash the jackfruit until it resembles shredded meat. Stir in 1 cup of barbecue sauce and simmer until it is completely warmed through. Add more sauce if necessary to obtain your desired consistency.
6. Serve with coleslaw and buns of choice.

Nutrition Information

Serving: 1 sandwich, Calories: 268kcal, Carbohydrates: 37g, Protein: 6g, Fat: 1g, Sodium: 345mg, Fiber: 2g, Sugar: 6g

Recipe adapted from: delishknowledge.com

