

Beauty Foods

What we put in our bodies can have a greater effect on our skin than all those expensive creams, serums, and lotions we slather on. Here are some natural—and delicious—beauty boosters.



AVOCADO:

THE NATURAL ANTI-INFLAMMATORY

The next time you dip into some spicy guacamole, take solace in the fact that all those calories (about 250 per avocado) contain essential oils and B-complex vitamins, which are not only good for your heart but your skin. One avocado gives you about a quarter of your daily requirement of niacin (vitamin B3), an anti-inflammatory that calms irritated, blotchy skin, says Diana Hurwitz, MD, a dermatologist at the Westchester Medical Group in Rye. Anti-inflammatories work by constricting blood vessels, making them look less red.



MANGO:

ONE-A-DAY VITAMIN FOR YOUR SKIN

Vitamin A maintains and repairs skin cells (a deficiency—or excess—will leave your skin dry and flaky) and a single mango will give you 80 percent of your daily requirement—at only 70 calories. “Most signs of aging on the skin are the result of sun damage, which is caused by free radicals from ultraviolet radiation,” Dr. Hurwitz says. “Vitamin A is an antioxidant that counteracts the free radicals.”



MUSHROOMS:

THE UNSUNG HERO

With all the hoopla about eating brightly colored fruits and veggies, mushrooms may be left on the plate, without good reason, according to Elizabeth DeRobertis, a registered dietician in White Plains. “Mushrooms are rich in selenium, copper, and other antioxidants and can be an important source of B vitamins, especially for people who don’t eat meat,” she says. They are also rich in potassium and are one of the best plant-based sources of niacin—essential for healthy skin, she says. With only 15 to 20 calories per cup, they can be added guilt-free to any meal for some extra healthful benefits.



RED PEPPER:

THE ANTI-WRINKLE VEGGIE

A red pepper has twice as much vitamin C as an orange; you’d have to drink 16 ounces of OJ (200 calories) to get the same amount of vitamin C as in one red pepper (37 calories). According to a recent study by the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, the more vitamin C you consume, the fewer wrinkles you’ll get. “Vitamin C is essential in the production of collagen—the substance that keeps skin looking young—and needs to be replenished constantly,” says Joshua S. Fink, MD, a physician in Mount Kisco.

Naturally Gray

This is what no one tells you when you begin to color your hair: at some point—the point at which your hair begins to turn gray—you won’t be able to stop. Most people, of course, don’t want to stop. But what if you tire of coloring your hair and just want your natural gray?

Got a year? “It takes about a year to make the change, unless you choose to cut your hair very short,” Kathleen Troy, a colorist at Paulo’s Atelier Hair Salon in Bedford Hills, says. “Blondes have an easier time of it than brunettes; you just do a lot of highlighting to lighten the hair, then let the grays come in around the face and go from there. With darker hair, there is more of an awkward transition. We can add low lights, but at some point, you are going to need to cut your hair to get rid of all the solid color at the ends. I find that only five percent of my clients who try to go gray stick with the challenge. One woman who did came back to me saying her husband and kids hated it!”

If you do decide to take the challenge, Martha Clemence, a stylist educator for nationwide chain Fantastic Sams Hair Salons, advises: “There is no specific cut that looks best with gray hair, but flatter your face shape and use your gray as a highlight. Update your hairstyle; if you’re older and your cut is dated plus you have gray hair, you’ll just look old!”



Saving (Up For) Face

The \$500 (and up) facial has come to Westchester. What’s more, it even comes to you. There’s a catch: you need to install a dedicated facial room in your house; price tag \$2,000 (and up). Lorraine Hoy, one of our longtime favorite aestheticians and multiple “Best of Westchester” winner, is now taking her pampering show on the road, traveling to her “really high-end” clients’ homes. When asked who they might be, she demurred, confiding only that there was a mix of actors, celebs, and business types. “I help them design a spa setup in their homes, then come to give them facials. It’s the ultimate in convenience and privacy.” And price. Yikes. To contact her, call (914) 523-2807.