

# Popular Healing Foods From the Bible

By Lynn C. Allison

“Whether you eat, drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God,” (1 Corinthians 10:31)

The Bible is filled with references to the healing properties of foods and herbs. And the wisdom of our ancestors has survived scientific scrutiny; many of the foods listed in the Bible are now recognized as containing powerful anti-aging, anti-inflammatory nutrients.

“Modern medicine has ancient roots that date back to time immemorial,” Ellen Kamhi, Ph.D., an herbalist and author of “The Natural Medicine Chest” tells *Health Radar*. “In both the Old and New Testament, many references are made to the use of medicinal plants. For example, during their sojourn in the desert, the Hebrews lamented missing onions, garlic, and many of the plants they used for food and medicine in Egypt.”

Today, nutritionists tout the benefits of eating allium vegetables such as garlic and onions to protect against cancer and cardiovascular disease.

Here are some more popular healing foods from the Bible:

- **Barley.** The Bible is filled with references to barley, which is among the earliest known and most nourishing grains ever to be cultivated. Scientists at Montana State University found that a diet high in barley helps lower cholesterol levels. The late James

Duke, Ph.D., author of the classic bestseller, “Herbs of the Bible,” pointed out that barley is rich in vitamins E, B6, B2, and both folic and pantothenic acids.

- **Fish.** Because there was no way of preserving fish, most people in Biblical times ate their catch fresh. Today, we know that fish contains important omega-3 fatty acids, which are powerful anti-inflammatories, particularly for those suffering from arthritis. Eating fish two to three times weekly may also help lower cholesterol levels and blood pressure, according to the American Heart Association.

- **Garlic.** One of the world’s oldest healing foods, garlic was used both as a food and as a powerful medicine. The 100,000 laborers who built the Egyptian pyramids were fed garlic, leeks, and onions for 30 years as part of their stipend, said Duke. Science has shown that consuming aged garlic extract improves cholesterol levels, reduces blood pressure, and can boost your immune system.

- **Nuts.** The book of Genesis was specific about recommending pistachios and almonds as “choice fruits of the land.” Joel Fuhrman, M.D., nutritionist and author of “The End of Diabetes” and “The End of Heart Disease” tells *Health Radar* that raw nuts and seeds are packed with nutrients. “Nut consumption offers strong protection against heart disease,” he says. “They decrease total cholesterol and lower LDL

cholesterol when eaten daily. They also prevent inflammation of the blood vessels.”

- **Honey.** This natural sweetener is mentioned several times in the Bible, as well as in other ancient spiritual texts, Harold Koenig, M.D, director of the Center for Spirituality, Theology, and Health at Duke University tells *Health Radar*. Honey is rich in antioxidants that have been linked to reduced risk of cancer, strokes, and heart attacks. Several studies conducted by the National Institutes of Health revealed that honey limits the increase of blood glucose levels, which is important to people with diabetes. It also raises “good” HDL cholesterol while lowering “bad” LDL cholesterol. Honey is also a potent antibacterial used for centuries in healing wounds. A study of 139 children found that honey did a better job of easing nighttime coughs and promoting sleep than popular drugs such as Benadryl for children over the age of 1 year.

- **Lentils.** In Biblical times, just as today, dry lentils were cooked in soups and stews or ground into flour and mixed with barley for bread. The Cleveland Clinic says the seeds became popular in the U.S. during World War II when they were used as an affordable meat substitute. Studies have shown that eating lentils regularly reduces your risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes, obesity, heart disease, and cancer. □