FUTURE 50 FOODS:
A SPOTLIGHT ON THE 50 INGREDIENTS THAT MIGHT CHANGE THE FATE OF OUR FOOD SYSTEM

Knorr PROFESSIONAL

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Today's reality is that about 75% of what the global population consumes relies on just 12 crops and 5 animal species – when there are actually over 5,000 species of crops that we could be eating.

This is cause for great concern because the practices of cultivating single crops and relying heavily on animal-based foods are threatening food security, with serious consequences for our vulnerable natural ecosystems.

A key to promoting a healthier planet is to expand the variety of foods we grow and eat. As one of the world's largest food brands, Knorr® believes it has a role to play in generating greater awareness of the food supply challenge, while also promoting positive solutions.

That's why, in collaboration with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), leading scientists, nutritionists and agricultural experts, Knorr® has compiled The Future 50 Foods Report, showcasing 50 foods we should eat more of to promote a sustainable global food system and a nutritious diet for all.

WHAT ARE THE FUTURE 50 FOODS & WHY WERE THEY CHOSEN?

The Future 50 Foods are a combination of familiar yet under-consumed foods (such as lentils, wild rice and kale) as well as lesser-known foods (such as fonio, pumpkin flowers and cactus).

They have been selected based on their high nutritional value, relative environmental impact, flavour, acceptability, accessibility and affordability.

This carefully curated list of varied, sustainable, plant-based food sources will help expand global biodiversity, improve nutrition and support our planet's future for generations to come, with a view to reducing our reliance on a small base of crops.

HOW CAN CHEFS LEAD THE CHANGE?

By embracing the Future 50 Foods and switching from overused and over-cultivated ingredients to more diverse and sustainable ingredients, chefs can begin to better influence the way consumers eat and how future generations of chefs cook, for a better food future.

THIS YEAR'S NATIONAL CHEF OF THE YEAR COMPETITION WILL SHINE A SPOTLIGHT ON SOME OF THESE INGREDIENTS

We're focusing on a handful of the Future 50 ingredients as part of this year's competition criteria.

WATERCRESS • *Nasturtium officinale*

Watercress, also known as nose twister, is related to mustard and is part of the brassica family of vegetables. Native to Europe and Asia, there is evidence of its existence in Ancient Greece up to 3,000 years ago. However, it wasn't until the late 20th century that it became popular commercially.

Today it is eaten in many countries and spans most continents. It prefers cool climates and can grow fully or partially submerged in water, or in rich, moist soil. If left to mature, the plant will produce pleasant-smelling white flowers, which attract bees. It also produces edible seeds, which it uses to self-sow.

Considered a 'superfood' because of its high content of antioxidants (particularly beta carotene and vitamin C), watercress also contains significant amounts of vitamins A and K. Watercress has a pungent, slightly bitter, peppery taste and crisp texture. Both the delicate green leaves and paler stems can be eaten either sautéed or fresh, and are great mixed in soups, salads, tarts and omelettes.

PUMPKIN FLOWERS • *Cucurbita pepo*

Both pumpkin leaves and flowers are not only edible, but highly nutritious and delicious. The female flowers have tiny fruit attached which can form a pumpkin, while the male flowers don't. The combination of mild pumpkin taste and soft texture make them the perfect addition to soups, sauces, salads and pasta dishes. Like other cucurbits, pumpkins grow best in rich, well-drained soil in the hot, humid climates of Egypt, Mexico, India, parts of the US, China and Ukraine. It is recommended to discard the centre of the flower (the stamen) prior to prepration. The flowers are rich in many nutrients, including vitamin C. These precious flowers are often discarded, wasting a good source of nutrients and flavour.

PUMPKIN LEAVES • *Cucurbita pepo*

Although the leaves of this creeping vine are commonly eaten in Africa and Asia, the pumpkin plant is believed to have first been cultivated thousands of years ago in Central America. It belongs to the cucurbit family and loves sunny, well-drained soil. Pumpkin leaves are often left behind when pumpkins are picked, wasting the abundance of nutrients packed in to these versatile leafy greens. Pumpkins, like many other plants, have multiple edible parts that should not be wasted.

Pumpkin leaves are a good source of iron, vitamin K and carotenoids. Although there is no scientific evidence to prove it, many associate the leaves with increased fertility.

Pumpkin leaves taste like a cross between asparagus, broccoli and spinach and, when young, can be eaten fresh in salads. Steaming or sautéing the leaves brings out the sweetness as some varieties may have a more bitter flavour. In West Africa they are often added to soups and stews.

WALNUTS • *Juglans regia*

Possibly the oldest tree food known to humans, records report walnut consumption dating back 10,000 years[1]. Containing more omega 3 fatty acids and vitamin E than many other nuts, the kernel itself resembles the two halves of a brain, reinforcing their nickname of 'brain food'.

Walnuts contain protein, vitamins and minerals, and have been claimed to be one of the most nutritious nuts. Slightly bittersweet with an oily texture, they may be pickled when young or 'wet'. However, they are more commonly eaten dried, either raw or cooked in both sweet and savoury dishes such as cakes, muesli, stews, sauces and dressings. Dry-frying or roasting turns them a lovely gold and really brings out their flavour.

Grown in China, Turkey, Iran, Mexico and the US, walnuts fare best in rich, deep soil and sunny climates and grow all year round.

SAFFRON MILK CAP MUSHROOMS • *Lactarius deliciosus*

In Russia, where mushroom picking, cooking and eating is a big part of the culture, tourists may find themselves being offered saffron milk cap tasting as an activity. In Siberia, saffron milk caps are used for treating a wide variety of conditions, such as asthma, jaundice and food poisoning. However, these benefits have not been scientifically proven. Milk caps grow in pine forests in Europe and North America and are picked between August and October.

Their name comes from their beautiful saffron colour and the orange milky liquid they ooze from their gills when cut. They are a good source of fibre with a nutty, woody taste that has hints of umami and a meaty texture.

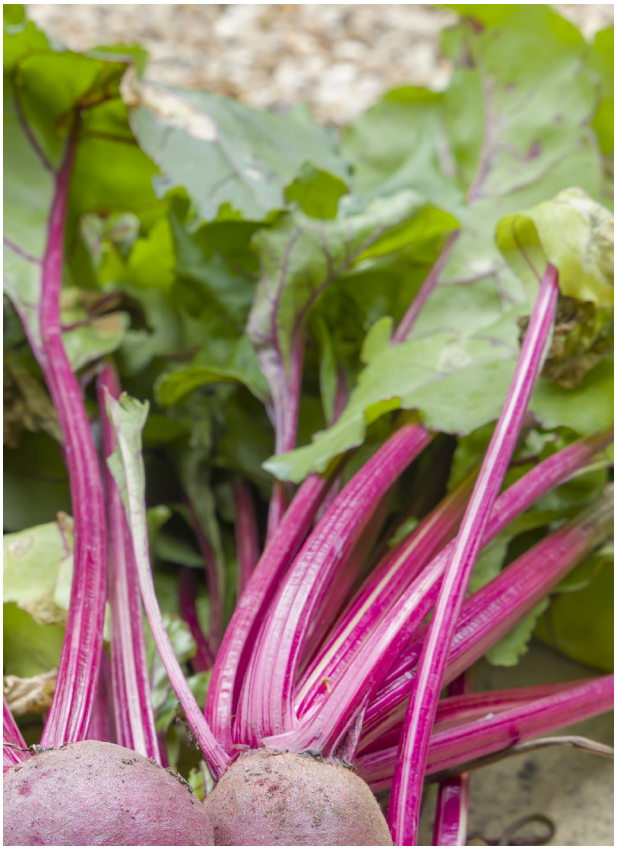
They can be fried in olive oil with garlic, parsley, cream or red wine. They can also be marinated, salted or pickled, or added to stews and soups. They feature in risottos and pasta dishes served in various restaurants across Europe and North America.

KALE • *Brassica oleracea var. sabellica*

Kale is a brassica and belongs to the cabbage family. It is a hardy plant, able to withstand temperatures as low as – 15 degrees Celsius. It has lushly dark leaves that can be curly or smooth and sometimes have a blue or purple tinge. The taste, distinct and slightly bitter, is reported to become sweeter when exposed to extreme cold such as a heavy frost, but more bitter and unpleasant in hot weather.

Kale is grown throughout Europe and in the US, available year-round, and packed with vitamins A, K and C, as well as being a good source of manganese and copper.

The leaves and stems can be eaten together. The stems are tough while the leaves are soft, so may require different cooking times. Kale can be eaten raw, roasted, boiled, sautéed or even grilled. Because of its high nutritional value, kale has been dried and turned in to powder to be added to soups and smoothies and made into chips eaten as a savoury snack. It can be enjoyed as a side dish or mixed with other vegetables in stews, curries, or soups.



BEET GREENS • *Beta vulgaris*

Beets have grown in popularity in recent years and are associated with a variety of health benefits. However, the leafy green part of the beetroot is the most nutritious part of the plant and is often overlooked and left unused.

With a flavour and nutrition profile similar to that of Swiss chard, beet greens are rich in vitamins K and A[2]. Compared to greens such as turnip and mustard greens, beet greens contain higher levels of magnesium and potassium. Per serving, beet greens provide up to 25 percent of the recommended daily allowance of magnesium, which helps regulate a variety of biochemical reactions in the body, including muscle and nerve function, blood pressure and blood glucose control. Studies in the US and Europe report that around 50 percent of people get less than the recommended levels of magnesium[3,4,5].

Beet greens also contain as much iron as spinach, plus the plant pigment lutein, which is associated with good eye health[6]. Beet plants thrive in cooler temperatures, are tolerant of frost and grow at a rapid pace. They are a nutrition-packed addition to stews, soups and salads.

With a subtle taste that is similar to kale, beet greens are delicious sautéed in olive oil or balsamic vinegar for a tasty side dish. Developing a soft and sweet taste when cooked, they can even be baked to make crisps.

SPROUTED CHICKPEAS • *Cicer arietinum*

Chickpeas, also known as garbanzo beans, are small, yellowish round beans orginally popular in Middle Eastern dishes. They have recently gained popularity in Western countries, being added to salads and made into spreads, mainly hummus. They have a rich, creamy and nutty flavour. With one cup of chickpeas providing approximately ten grams of protein and a somewhat meaty texture, they are a viable substitute for meat in many dishes. Chickpeas are good for you and sprouted chickpeas are even better. They're also crunchier and have more flavour.

Chickpeas are one of the easiest beans to sprout. Doing so neutralises the phytic acid and allows the body to better absorb the nutrients, such as calcium, magnesium and zinc[7]. To sprout chickpeas, soak for eight hours, drain and rinse. Transfer to a glass jar or bowl and cover with a cheesecloth. Repeat the rinse and drain steps a few times until the sprouts are to the desired length. This usually takes three to four days. Like all sprouts, sprouted chickpeas are prone to bacterial growth, so it's important to follow good safety principles.

Add them to stews, soups, stir-fries, or simply enjoy as a side dish. Hummus made from sprouted chickpeas has more crunch and a nuttier flavour than unsprouted chickpeas.

FUTURE 50 FOODS

For the full Future 50 report and to discover the complete list of Future 50 ingredients please **click here.**

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[5]Snapp SS, et al. Biodiversity can support a greener revolution in Africa. Proc Nat Acad Sci. 2014;107(48):20840–45.

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