5 Sleep-Friendly Nutrients to Add to Your Diet

5 MIN READ

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BY HEATHER HURLOCK

Sleep better, naturally, with foods that support deep sleep.

You already know **not to scroll before bed** or down a latte at 4 p.m., but did you know your *dinner plate* might be sabotaging your sleep?

Emerging research shows that what we eat directly influences how well we sleep, from how fast we fall asleep to how long we stay in deep, restorative sleep. Certain nutrients act as natural sleep aids, while others disrupt your body's circadian rhythms or blood sugar balance. The good news? A few strategic shifts can help your body rest better, night after night.

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What you eat in the hours leading up to bedtime can either support your body's natural sleep cycles or short-circuit them. Specific nutrients work behind the scenes to regulate hormones, calm the nervous system, and stabilize your blood sugar while you rest. Here are five research-backed nutritional strategies to help you fall asleep faster, sleep more deeply, and wake up feeling restored.

1. Magnesium for Muscle Relaxation and Deeper Sleep

Magnesium helps **quiet the nervous system**, supports slow-wave (deep) sleep, and significantly increases sleep time while decreasing early morning awakening.

THE FOODS:

Add leafy greens (spinach, Swiss chard, collard greens), almonds, cashews, avocado, chickpeas, lentils and pumpkin, flax, and chia seeds like pumpkin to your daily meals.

2. Tryptophan to Increase Sleep Time

Tryptophan is an amino acid that helps the brain produce serotonin, which is then converted into melatonin, the hormone that signals it's time to sleep. Research shows that tryptophan **increases total sleep time**, reduces waking time, and number of awakenings.

THE FOODS:

Kidney beans, chickpeas, red lentils, chicken, turkey, rice, eggs, oats, pumpkin seeds, and even tofu are natural sources.

3. Omega-3 Fatty Acids to Support Circadian Health

EPA and DHA support melatonin production and help regulate the body's internal clock. Some studies have found a correlation between **Omega-3 levels and sleep quality**, as well as improved sleep in **people with type 2 diabetes**.

THE FOODS:

Sardines, anchovies, wild salmon, flaxseeds, walnuts, hempseeds.

4. Fiber-Rich Carbohydrates Stabilize Blood Sugar Overnight

These support overnight glucose stability, which leads to **deeper sleep** by

promoting slow-wave sleep and reducing REM-related arousals.

THE FOODS:

Lentils, steel-cut or rolled oats, barley, sweet potatoes, quinoa, berries,

5. Melatonin to Improve Sleep Onset and Quality

Melatonin is a hormone naturally produced by the body to signal that it's time to sleep. Levels rise in the evening and fall in the morning, helping to regulate your circadian rhythm. Eating foods that contain small amounts of melatonin may help support this cycle and **improve sleep onset** and quality, especially when consumed in the evening.

THE FOODS:

Tart cherries, kiwi, walnuts, pistachios, (Eggs, salmon, yogurt and oats, provide tryptophan, B6, magnesium, and zinc, which your brain needs to *make* melatonin).

Bonus: Your Gut, Your Sleep: Why Microbiome Health Matters

Your gut and brain are in constant communication via the gut-brain axis, and growing research suggests this connection plays a key role in sleep regulation. A healthy gut microbiome supports the production of sleep-promoting neurotransmitters like serotonin and GABA, modulates inflammation, and influences circadian rhythm through microbial metabolites such as short-chain fatty acids.

A 2025 review in the ***Journal of Food Science*** highlights how prebiotics, probiotics, and fermented foods can enhance sleep by improving microbiome composition and supporting these neurochemical pathways. Though more large-scale

human trials are needed, the emerging science is promising. Here's how you should load your plates with during the day to **support your microbiome**:

- **Fiber-rich foods** like leafy greens, berries, garlic, oats, and whole grains to nourish beneficial gut bacteria.
- **Fermented foods** like yogurt, kefir, kimchi, and sauerkraut to introduce sleep-supportive probiotics.

By feeding your body the nutrients it needs to regulate melatonin, balance blood sugar, and calm the nervous system, you create the perfect internal environment for consistent, rejuvenating rest. Think of it as a nightly investment in longevity, cognition, and metabolic health—served with a side of quinoa.

Check out our **Super Age Sleep Guide** for more tips on improving the quality of your sleep.

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WRITTEN BY:



Heather Hurlock