



Seaweed *sensation!*

Seaweed: *the nutrition secrets*

Seaweeds, or sea vegetables, are one of Japan's best-known health boosters. The good news is that they're easy to add to your daily diet! By Christine Bailey

Sea vegetables, otherwise known as seaweed, have an image problem. Although they're often seen as slimy and horrible, they have some remarkable health benefits. They are one of the richest sources of essential minerals and vitamins including vitamin B12, potassium, calcium, iron and iodine, which is essential for healthy thyroid function.

Studies have shown that sea vegetables may reduce the risk of certain cancers, including breast cancer. The antioxidants in sea vegetables (betacarotene, vitamins A, C and E and selenium) may help prevent ageing and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, so include some in your balanced diet.

Adding small amounts to your meals can really give you a health boost – sprinkle them in soups, stews, salads and rice, or use to make sushi!



* **Kombu**

A type of kelp that is rich in potassium, calcium, magnesium, B vitamins, iron and iodine, which can improve the body's metabolism and immunity. Kelp tablets are often used to aid thyroid function but don't exceed the recommended daily amount (RDA), see box, right.

■ **Preparation and cooking:** Needs to be soaked for 20 minutes and cooked for at least 45 minutes. It's often used to soften beans and rice while cooking and preparing soups. It can be ground and mixed with herbs and spices for seasoning.

* **Arame**

Mild in flavour, arame contains 10 per cent minerals and is high in calcium, iron, iodine and potassium – it's good for thyroid function and metabolism.

■ **Preparation and cooking:** Soak for four minutes then add to dishes or simmer in water for 10 minutes. A good choice if you haven't eaten seaweed before as it's so mild and goes well with noodles, stir fries or salads.

* **Nori**

The most common seaweed, because of its mild flavour and easy-to-use sheet form. It contains 45 per cent protein and is rich in antioxidants betacarotene and vitamins C and D, as well as B vitamins, calcium, iron, and iodine. It's a good source of essential fatty acids and can help lower cholesterol levels and aid metabolism.

■ **Preparation and cooking:** Nori can be lightly toasted over a gas flame and then either wrapped around rice as sushi, or cut or torn to make garnishes, mixed with dried fruit and nuts as a snack, or added to soups and stews.



* Hijiki

Incredibly rich in B vitamins and minerals, particularly iron, iodine and calcium. A great source of soluble fibre, it's good for stabilising blood sugar levels and aiding digestion.

■ **Preparation and cooking:** Soak for 15-20 minutes. It expands by four times and has a very strong flavour, so you'll only need to use a small amount. Cook in stews and soups for 30 minutes or add to salads and stir fries.

How much to eat:



HH living foods adviser Dr Gillian McKeith recommends eating seaweed two to three times a week in small amounts. All varieties are high in sodium, so don't eat too much – particularly if you're prone to high blood pressure – 25g (1oz) a week is enough. Also watch out for amounts of iodine in seaweed, as eating high levels (over 1000mcg daily) can result in either hypothyroidism (underactive thyroid) or hyperthyroidism (overactive). The daily recommended amount is 150mcg. Studies have shown that high intakes of kelp tablets interfere with normal thyroid function, so check iodine levels on labels carefully and check with a practitioner if you have an existing thyroid problem.

* Wakame

Contains calcium and iron, and the antioxidants betacarotene, vitamins A, C and E and B vitamins. It acts as a diuretic to relieve water retention and studies have shown it also has anti-cancer properties. Can relieve premenstrual symptoms if eaten regularly.

■ **Preparation and cooking:** Soak for just five minutes. Its mild flavour is good for soups, salads and pasta. It can even be used instead of lettuce in sandwiches.

* Dulse

Also known as Irish moss, this is one of the most popular sea vegetables. It's exceptionally rich in protein and iron, and vitamin B12. It's a good source of the minerals manganese (good for bones and cartilage, so useful for easing joint pain and injuries), calcium, magnesium, phosphorous and potassium.

■ **Preparation and cooking:** Doesn't need to be soaked before use. It works well in soups and stocks or in vegetable dishes, and can also be used as a garnish.

Further reading • *Living Foods For Health* by Dr Gillian McKeith (Piatkus, £6.99) • *Sea Vegetable Celebration: Recipes Using Ocean Vegetables* by Shep Erhart and Leslie Cerier (Book Publishing Company, £12.99) • *Simply Seaweed* by Lesley Ellis (Grub Street Publishing, £7.99).
Stockists • Clearspring dried seaweeds include: Arame (£2.49/50g); Japanese Kombu (£2.75/50g); Nori (£2.79/10 sheets); call 020 8746 0152 or visit www.clearspring.co.uk • Seagreens range includes: Wild Seaweed Food Capsules (£12.75/60), Everyday Food Capsules (£6.75/30) and Seaweed Table Condiment In Grinder (£12.75); call 01444 400403 * HH readers can buy Green People Seaweed Capsules (£9.99/60 capsules) from the *Here's Health* shop at ThinkNatural by calling 0845 345 0912 or dialling up www.thinknatural.com

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Turn the page to find out how seaweed can be a beneficial beauty booster! ▶



Seaweed *sensation!*

Seaweed: *the beauty benefits*

It may not seem glamorous, but seaweed is one of the most versatile natural beauty ingredients around.

By Anita Nair

The slimy seaweed you see scattered over beaches may not look like a beauty booster but you'd be surprised - the various species of seaweed, collectively known as algae, can help your hair shine and your skin glow.

With 103 different minerals, vitamins and proteins, including iron, calcium and antioxidant vitamins A, C and E, the beauty benefits of this humble sea plant have become well known. 'Seaweed in skincare can help ease a variety of skin conditions, from acne to dry skin and cellulite,' says Amanda Cochrane, author of *Perfect Skin* (Piatkus, £9.99). HH natural cosmetics adviser agrees: 'I think certain species of algae and seaweed have very important roles to play in skincare,' she says. Fortunately, you don't have to drape yourself in seaweed to reap the rewards, as nowadays it's a major ingredient in lots of beauty products.

* Scrub up

Get your skin clear and glowing with cleansing and exfoliating products. For a smooth complexion, use Cariad Exfoliating Gel (£7.50/60ml), with seaweed extracts and crushed olive stones, or try Lush Seaweed Sushi Facial Cleanser (£2.95/100g), which is wrapped in nori seaweed. For an all-over cleanse, choose Martha Hill Seaweed Therapeutic Body Wash (£5.80/200ml), or Molton Brown Seamoss Energising Bath And Shower Therapy (£11/300ml), to relax muscles and nourish skin. Lush Sea Vegetable Soap (£1.60/100g) contains detoxifying Japanese arame seaweed, thought to improve the appearance of cellulite when massaged into the skin regularly. Or try Woodspirits Seaweed Scrub soap (£6.50 each), to cleanse and exfoliate your body.

* Supplement with seaweed

You won't just benefit from putting seaweed products on to your skin; taking supplements can help to boost beauty from the inside, too. Try Green People vegan Seaweed Capsules (£9.99/60 capsules) to help promote healthy hair, skin and nails. Seagreens Daily 100% Wild Seaweed Vegetable (£12.75/60 capsules) contain all the goodness of the plant. Or get a detoxing boost from Elemis Cal-Metab Body Enhancement Capsules (£17.50/60 capsules), with two types of algae to help cleanse the system.





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The seaweed selection

Green seaweed: The most common, found in freshwater as well as the sea. It has lower nutritional content than the other forms of seaweed, but is still packed with minerals and antioxidant vitamins.

Red seaweed: Contains high levels of vitamins, minerals and nutrients such as potassium, iron, zinc and vitamin C.

Brown seaweed: Absorbs more minerals from sea water than the other types. It's packed with nutrients including selenium, folic acid and antioxidants.

* Get glowing

Try a seaweed face mask for a deep revitalising treatment. Green People Vitamin Mask (£9.95/50ml) is ideal for dry or mature skin. Or smooth on Lush deep cleansing BB Seaweed Face Mask (6.15/100g), Weleda Iris Intensive Treatment Masque (£5.45/30ml), or the rich Algimud Active Seaweed Mask from Finders Dead Sea Spa Magik (£2.99/25g).



* Home haven

Turn your bathroom into a luxurious spa. Add Molton Brown Seamoss Stress Relieving Soak Therapy (£16/250g) or Woodspirits Seaweed Bath And Massage Oil (£11.75/250ml), to your bath. Exfoliate with Dermalogica Hydro-Active Mineral Salts (£17.30/284g), with brown seaweed, or Molton Brown Skin Smoothing Body Exfoliator (£15/200ml), with pumice and seaweed. Then smooth on Algimud Peel-Off Body Mask from Finders Dead Sea Spa Magik (£9.95/3 x 100g sachets) to help detox and boost circulation.



Stockists & mail order

• Cariat: 01462 443517 • Dermalogica: 0800 591818 • Elemis: 020 8954 8033 • Finders Dead Sea Spa Magik: 01580 211055 • Green People: 01444 401444 • Lush: 01202 668545 • Martha Hill: 0800 980 6662 • Molton Brown: 020 7625 6550 • Seagreens: 01444 400403 • Weleda:

0115 944 8222 • Woodspirits: 020 8293 4949.

■ You can buy the following products, including our special offer, from the **Here's Health** shop at ThinkNatural: visit www.thinknatural.com/hereshealth or call 0845 345 0912.

• Green People Seaweed Capsules (£9.99/60

capsules) • The Faith In Nature Seaweed Pack – containing Seaweed Shampoo With Essential Oils (400ml), Seaweed Hair Conditioner (400ml), Seaweed Foam Bath And Shower Gel (400ml) and Seaweed Soap (100g) – can be yours at a 20 per cent discount, for the special offer price of £16.04 (usually £20.05) – saving £4.01!