

3 Spice-Infused Recipes For a Healthier Cold and Flu Season



We've heard the tried-and-true nutritional recommendations for navigating cold and flu season, like taking vitamin C supplements and eating zinc-rich foods. But if you want a truly healthier cold and flu season this fall, we encourage you to [think outside the box with some novel, new ideas](#). That includes meals that are spicy and flavored with spices and herbs that help raise your body temperature, which [Yale University](#) reports may help your body fight off pathogens and germs. The following three spice-infused recipes are easy to make, oh-so-delicious, and have a bit of a spicy kick to help raise your core temperature. Better yet, these spices also add important antioxidants and plant compounds that further support a strong immune system. And don't worry — you can adjust the level of spice to your own heat preferences.

Spice-Infused Recipes: Zesty Ginger Protein Shake

Launch into your morning with this protein-rich smoothie that's rich, creamy, and balances natural sweetness with a bit of a kick from ginger root. Ginger is a popular spice and herbal remedy that has been traditionally used for its potential health benefits, including its positive effects on the immune system. For example, ginger contains bioactive compounds like gingerol, which have [potent anti-inflammatory effects](#). Chronic inflammation will weaken your immune system over time, and ginger can help reduce this inflammation, allowing your immune system to function more effectively. Ginger is also rich in antioxidants, improves blood circulation (key for circulating those important germ-fighting white blood cells), and may have antibacterial and antiviral properties, which can help your body fight off infections and illnesses.

1 ripe banana, peeled and sliced
1 cup fresh or frozen mango chunks
1/2 cup Greek yogurt or a dairy-free alternative (like almond or coconut yogurt)
1 tablespoon fresh ginger, peeled and grated (adjust to your taste)
1 tablespoon honey or maple syrup (adjust to your desired sweetness)
1/2 cup unsweetened almond milk or any milk of your choice
1/2 cup ice cubes (optional, for a colder smoothie)

Instructions:

Prepare your ingredients by peeling and grating the fresh ginger, slicing the banana, and measuring out the other ingredients.

Place the sliced banana, mango chunks, Greek yogurt, grated ginger, honey or maple syrup, and almond milk into a blender.

If you want your smoothie to be extra cold and creamy, add the ice cubes as well.

Blend all the ingredients until smooth. If the mixture is too thick, you can add more almond milk to achieve your desired consistency.

Taste the smoothie and adjust the sweetness or ginger flavor if necessary. Add more honey, maple syrup, or grated ginger as needed.

Once the smoothie is well blended and has reached the desired consistency and flavor, enjoy! You can even garnish it with a slice of fresh ginger or a sprinkle of cinnamon if you like.

Spice-Infused Recipes: Thai-Inspired Kale Salad

Kale is in season during the fall, which means it's at peak nutritional value and flavor. Crunch kale, sweet tomatoes, protein- and fiber-rich quinoa, and other refreshing ingredients pair well with the Thai-inspired homemade dressing. The dressing elevates this simple dish to gourmet status, offering complex flavors and a sweet-and-spicy profile that brings the salad ingredients to life.

The heat in this dish comes from chili oil. Chili peppers are an incredible and often overlooked source of antioxidants, such as vitamin C and carotenoids like beta-carotene. Antioxidants help protect the body from oxidative stress and free radical damage, which can weaken the immune system.

The active compound in chili peppers, capsaicin, has also been studied for its anti-inflammatory properties and ability to promote better blood circulation. Proper circulation ensures that immune cells and nutrients are transported efficiently throughout the body.

SALAD

2 cups kale, washed and chopped
1 cup cooked quinoa, cooled
1/2 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
1/2 cup cucumber, diced
1/4 cup red onion, finely sliced
1/4 cup feta cheese, crumbled (optional)
2 tbsp toasted pine nuts or slivered almonds (optional)

DRESSING

2 tbsp chili oil (adjust to your desired spiciness)
2 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp lemon juice
1 clove garlic, minced
1/2 tsp honey or maple syrup (for sweetness)
Salt and pepper to taste

In a small bowl, whisk together the dressing ingredients (chili oil, olive oil, lemon juice, minced garlic, honey or maple syrup, and a pinch of salt and pepper). Taste the dressing and adjust the sweetness or spiciness to your liking. Set the dressing aside.

Wash the kale and remove the tough stems. Chop or tear the kale into bite-sized pieces. Place the kale in a large salad bowl.

Drizzle a bit of the dressing over the kale. Using your hands, gently massage the kale for a few minutes until it becomes tender and more palatable. The massaging process helps reduce the bitterness of the kale.

Add the cooked and cooled quinoa, cherry tomatoes, cucumber, and red onion to the salad bowl with the massaged kale.

If desired, add the crumbled feta cheese and toasted pine nuts or slivered almonds to the salad for extra flavor and texture.

Drizzle the remaining dressing over the salad. Toss everything together until well combined, ensuring the dressing coats all the ingredients.

Divide the salad into individual serving bowls or plates. You can drizzle a bit more chili oil on top for extra spice if you like, then enjoy! It's a nutritious and flavorful dish with a delightful kick of heat from the chili oil.

Spice-Infused Recipes: Spicy Cajun Shrimp Pasta

This dish is not only delicious but also quick to prepare, quickly transporting you and your family to New Orleans where Cajun spices and seafood are a go-to. Cajun seasoning and spices are a flavorful blend of herbs and spices commonly used in Cajun and Creole cuisine, which originated in the southern United States.

Many of the herbs and spices in Cajun seasoning, such as oregano, thyme, and cayenne pepper, contain compounds with anti-inflammatory properties and that protect cells from damage caused by free radicals. A diet rich in antioxidants can support overall well-being and strengthen your immune system. Some of the spices also have antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties, such as garlic and cayenne pepper, which may aid in immune support by helping your body fight off infections and illnesses.

But the health benefits of Cajun seasoning doesn't start and end with your immune system. Spices like thyme, oregano, and garlic powder in Cajun seasoning are associated with heart-healthy benefits. They may help lower blood pressure, reduce cholesterol levels, and support cardiovascular health.

HOMEMADE SPICE MIX

1 1/2 tbsp paprika
1/2 tbsp cayenne pepper (adjust to your spice preference)
1/2 tbsp garlic powder
1/2 tbsp onion powder
1/2 tbsp dried oregano
1/2 tbsp dried thyme
1/2 tbsp salt
1/2 tbsp black pepper

PASTA

8 ounces linguine or your favorite pasta
1 pound large shrimp, peeled and deveined

2 tbsp olive oil
1 red bell pepper, thinly sliced
1 green bell pepper, thinly sliced
1 small onion, finely chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 can (14.5 oz) diced tomatoes
1 cup heavy cream (or a substitute like coconut milk for a dairy-free version)
2 tbsp Cajun spice mix (adjust to your spice preference)
Fresh parsley, chopped, for garnish
Grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

In a small bowl, combine all the Cajun spice mix ingredients. Set aside.

Cook the pasta according to package instructions until al dente. Drain and set aside.

In a large skillet, heat olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the shrimp and sprinkle with 1 tbsp of the Cajun spice mix. Cook the shrimp for 1-2 minutes on each side until they turn pink and opaque. Remove the shrimp from the skillet and set them aside.

In the same skillet, add the sliced bell peppers, chopped onion, and minced garlic. Sauté for about 3-4 minutes until they start to soften.

Add the diced tomatoes and the remaining 2 tablespoons of Cajun spice mix to the skillet. Stir in the heavy cream (or a dairy-free substitute) and bring the mixture to a simmer. Cook for 5-7 minutes until the sauce thickens.

Return the cooked shrimp to the skillet and add the cooked pasta. Toss everything together to coat the pasta and shrimp with the spicy Cajun sauce.

Garnish with chopped fresh parsley and grated Parmesan cheese (if desired). This spicy Cajun shrimp pasta is a flavorful and satisfying dinner option. Adjust the level of spiciness to your liking by modifying the amount of cayenne pepper and Cajun spice mix. Enjoy!

More Ways to Support Your Health

Your diet is just one piece in your immune system's wellness puzzle. [Thymic proteins](#) are another piece. It is the job of these thymic proteins to train the body's immune system to effectively seek and identify diseased cells. Unfortunately, your levels of thymic proteins fall as you get older. [BioPro-Plus 500](#) offers a full dose of thymic proteins to help restore your body's natural levels. Maximize your health by combining the above meals with healthy supplements.



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