

# Food for Thought

February 2026

## Foods that Love Your Heart

February is Heart Health Month! Show yourself love by choosing foods that are good for your heart. Heart healthy foods include oats, beans, berries, and citrus. Consider the following tips for ideas on how to include them in your meals:



### Oats:

- ♥ **Benefits:** Oats are rich in fiber, which helps lower cholesterol levels and improve heart health.

- ♥ **Meal Ideas:**

Use oats in smoothies, salads, or as a base for grain bowls to add fiber and nutrients. Start your day with a bowl of oatmeal topped with fresh berries and a drizzle of honey. For a heart healthy snack Make oat-based energy balls with peanut butter, oats, and dark chocolate chips.



### Beans:

- ♥ **Benefits:** Beans are packed with fiber, protein, and essential nutrients. They help lower cholesterol and promote healthy digestion.

- ♥ **Meal Ideas:** Include beans in your meals. Prepare a hearty bean salad with black beans, corn, diced tomatoes, and avocado and top with lime juice and cilantro. Make a bean chili using kidney beans, black beans, garbanzo beans and any other favorite bean along with spices for a delicious, nutritious and filling meal.



### Berries:

- ♥ **Benefits:** Berries, such as blueberries, strawberries, and raspberries, are high in antioxidants, vitamins, and fiber. They are heart healthy and have many other health benefits.

- ♥ **Meal Ideas:** Add fresh or frozen berries to smoothies, salads, or as a topping for yogurt. Enjoy a bowl of mixed berries with some Greek yogurt and a sprinkle of granola. Blend berries with spinach, banana, and almond milk for a refreshing smoothie.



### Citrus:

- ♥ **Benefits:** Citrus fruits like oranges, lemons, and grapefruits are rich in vitamin C and flavonoids, which can help lower blood pressure and improve overall heart health.

- ♥ **Meal Ideas:** Create a citrus salad with mixed greens, orange slices, walnuts and a light vinaigrette. Make a citrus infused water by washing lemon and limes then slicing them and adding them to your water bottle.



**These foods not only support heart health but also contribute to overall well-being.**

## Blueberry Bling

- 3 cups frozen or fresh blueberries
- 2 tsp butter (softened)
- 1 tbsp whole wheat flour
- 1 tbsp brown sugar
- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon



1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
3. Place frozen blueberries in a 9-inch pie plate. If using fresh blueberries, wash and drain before placing in a 9-inch pie plate.
4. In a small bowl, use a fork to mix margarine, flour, sugar, oats and cinnamon.
5. Sprinkle oat mixture over the blueberries.
6. Bake about 25 minutes. Enjoy while warm!
7. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours

## Cheesy Bean Dip

- 15 ounces canned refried beans
- 15 ounces salsa
- 1 teaspoon seasoning, such as cumin or garlic powder (optional)
- 1/2 cup reduced fat cheddar cheese, shredded
- 8 bell peppers, sliced into strips



1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Add refried beans, salsa, and seasoning (if using) to a microwave-safe bowl and mix.
3. Heat in a microwave for 2 minutes, then stir.
4. Top with cheese. Can serve hot or cold with bell pepper strips.

**Eat Smart Idaho offers FREE classes & educational events that can help limited resource individuals & families learn how to eat well for less! Ask for Eat Smart Idaho in your County.**

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