

# 5 STRESS FIGHTING SUPER FOODS!

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Done right, noshing when your nerves are jangling can keep you calm and healthy. Munch your way mellow!

## 1. Spinach

Three cups of spinach supply 40 percent of your daily magnesium, a mineral that blunts stress's effects on the body by stopping blood pressure from spiking, says Beth Reardon, R.D., director of integrative nutrition at Duke Integrative Medicine in Durham, North Carolina.

**Stress Rx:** Stuff fresh spinach into omelets and sandwiches to nix tension while you're on the party circuit.

## 2. Oranges

Healthy people who were exposed to cold viruses were more likely to get sick if they were under pressure, a study from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh finds. Even a brief bout of tension can influence your immune system, but vitamin C in citrus bolsters your body's natural bug barricades, so you can stay well.

**Stress Rx** Having your whole family over for brunch? Pour OJ.

## 3. Chocolate

This treat's pacifying powers are all in your head. "Cocoa boosts your body's levels of neurochemicals, which act on parts of the brain to help produce a sense of happiness and relaxation," says Alan Hirsch, M.D., director of the Smell & Taste Treatment and Research Foundation in Chicago.

**Stress Rx:** Drop some dark-chocolate squares in everyone's stocking, including your own!

## 4. Fish

Omega-3 fatty acids in fish such as salmon and tuna can help quell anxiety. Test takers who consumed more of the healthy fats for three weeks halted a surge in stress hormones when they were faced with a tough quiz, according to a study in *Diabetes & Metabolism*.

**Stress Rx:** Increase your omega-3 intake: Reach for smoked-salmon canapés from the appetizer tray.

## 5. Oatmeal

Spoon up serenity! The B vitamins in oats stimulate production of serotonin, a key neurotransmitter that sends soothing signals to your brain. Elisa Zied, R.D., author of *Nutrition at Your Fingertips* (Alpha Books), adds that your body digests oatmeal slowly, so you absorb the serotonin steadily.

**Stress Rx:** Have a bowl of oatmeal as a preshopping meal.