

Priya Tew, Award-winning dietician reveals why Kimchi should be added to weekly shop this winter

Brits are more aware of the health benefits of Kimchi than ever, with exports of the healthy Korean staple to the UK up 14.4% in 2020.*

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://EINPresswire.com/) -- Easily available to purchase across the UK, kimchi is a fermented food made using a variety of vegetables such as cabbage, radish, and cucumber with a combination of seasoning including red pepper powder, garlic, and ginger. Enjoyed in its home country at almost every meal of the day, kimchi is a probiotic powerhouse low in calories and rich in vitamins A, B1 and B2, as well as calcium and iron.



Dietitian and nutrition professional Priya Tew, Winner of the British Dietetic Association's Media Spokesperson of the Year

Priya Tew is an award-winning specialist dietitian who has appeared as an expert on TV programmes such as BBC's Eat Well For Less, Sky News and Channel 4's Dispatches. She said:

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Try kimchi as a condiment, a side dish or mixed into stir fries and salads. I'd recommend you start with just 1tbsp a day and build up your intake from there.”

Priya Tew

“Most cultures had their own way of preserving foods, in Korea one of these was by fermentation, leading to kimchi. Fermentation can extend the shelf life of foods and alters the nutrition profile. In the Western diet these fermented foods have been lost, along with their potential health benefits. The past few years have seen a surge in interest, partially due to the ongoing research in microbiome and gut health. There are links between gut health and so many disease states. Including more fermented foods such as kimchi in your diet is one way that could help improve

your gut health.”

People are becoming more knowledgeable about gut health and the role it plays in our wider overall health. Priya explained: “We know there is a link between how our gut health is and our overall health. Keeping our gut bacteria happy and healthy is therefore important. Eating plenty of fruit and vegetables, having a fibre rich diet and staying active helps keep our gut bacteria healthy. Fermented foods such as kimchi could also help deliver healthy bacteria to the gut to help top it up.”



Kimchi

Korea is kimchi’s country of origin and hundreds of different kimchi products are now available in more UK retailers than ever including Sainsbury’s, Asda, Morrisons, and Tesco as well as in Asian supermarkets across the country. With products ranging from fresh packets to store cupboard essentials and sauces, it’s easy to incorporate kimchi into an everyday diet. Priya advises to: “Try kimchi as a condiment, a side dish or mixed into stir fries and salads. I’d recommend you start with just 1tbsp a day and build up your intake from there.”

Combining research studies and her own knowledge as a specialist dietitian, Priya has outlined what we know to be some key health benefits of Kimchi.

- Low in calories, saturated fat and yet packed with nutrients, the main ingredients are Chinese cabbage and green leafy vegetables, making it a way to get extra green veggies into your meals.

- The fermentation process creates an environment that is favourable for the growth of certain lactic acid bacteria that are good for our gut. These bacteria are probiotics and present in the kimchi. The amount and type of bacteria varies depending on how long the kimchi has been fermented and how/where it has been made. For example, studies show that including more garlic increases the amount of lactobacillus bacteria and adding red pepper increases other types of bacteria.

- These bacteria can survive the digestive process and make it to the colon where they can affect the balance of gut bacteria. Certain lactobacillus have health benefits that can effect immune health and overall physical health. This may be because they outcompete less desirable bacteria or because the bacteria ferment on foods in the gut, producing other beneficial nutrients as by products.

- Plant based fermented foods such as kimchi can help make up a serving of vegetables. If you are new to kimchi it is a good idea to build up the amount you eat gradually. 80g is a portion of vegetables, so if you ate 80g of kimchi this would provide you with just over 1 g of fibre and 14% of your iron needs for the day. However, kimchi can be high in salt content, so this needs to be taken into account. A tbsp of kimchi with a meal can provide the flavour and salt needed for the meal.

- Kimchi provides a range of nutrients including vitamins A and C, powerful antioxidants that can help the body fight disease. Kimchi provides the B vitamins folate, B1 and B6, used in energy release and cell division, it also contains high levels of vitamin K, for blood clotting, and is a good source of calcium and iron. It can be high in salt, but can be eaten in sensible quantities alongside reducing the salt from other foods such as salty snacks.

- Fermented kimchi was shown to change the expression of genes in a study conducted on 24 women. The women were given either 180g fresh or fermented kimchi per day. This large amount of kimchi changed the balance of cells in the gut, making weight loss likely to occur. Weight loss itself was not measured but it shows that eating kimchi could aid weight control. We need further studies to support this.

To discover more about kimchi including recipe ideas such as kimchi pancakes and kimchi kimbap, visit www.k-foodfan.com.

About aTcenter Paris:

aTcenter Paris is the European regional headquarters of Korea Agro-Fisheries & Food Trade Corporation in the Republic of Korea (aT). aT is the government agency that was founded in 1967 entrusted with the promotion of trade, exportation, and marketing of Korean foods and beverages around the world. It participates in major food trade exhibitions, improves localisation strategies, enhances communication, creates business opportunities between manufacturers, exporters and importers, and develops many other marketing initiatives.

* From the period 01.01.2019 to 31.12.2019: 886 tons / £2.4 million (in value) exported to the UK. From the period 01.01.2020 to 31.12.2020: 893 tons / £2.7million (in value) exported to the UK. This represents a 14.4% increase in exports to the UK in terms of value.

References for dietitian research

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