

## Foods that Fight Dementia and a Recipe to Make Your Mouth Water – Lisa Houghton

Anyone who has lost a loved one to dementia knows how painful it can be to watch a loved one seemingly disappear before our very eyes. Not only does dementia make us miss the person we once knew, it also instills a fear in our hearts that one day, we could suffer from the same fate. Scientists have, thus far, been unable to pinpoint exactly what causes dementia, though there are a number of markers present in those suffering from the disease. [Expat-kitchen](#) is all about spreading the love for healthy, low-fat food, so in this post, we provide you with a list of foods which, in addition to keeping you trim and toned, will also keep diseases like Alzheimer's at bay. Make sure to stock up on these powerful brain foods:

- **[Vitamin E-rich foods](#):** Renowned researcher, Martha Clare Morris, ScD and her team at the Rush University Medical Centre in the US conducted a survey on some 6,000 subjects, in order to glean more information about the connection between what we eat and our brain health. One of the team's most interesting findings was that foods rich in Vitamin E were linked to a lower risk of developing Alzheimer's. Make sure to fill your pantry and fridge with green leafy vegetables, seeds, nuts, mangos, dried apricots, broccoli, avocados and green olives.
- ****Fish**:** Those who consume fish once a week were found to have a 60 per cent lower risk of developing Alzheimer's than those who did not consume this food. Fish is rich in n-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids, which are potent [neuro-protectors](#) and which have been found to possess therapeutic value.
- ****Low-fat foods**:** Important links between diets [high in saturated and trans-unsaturated fats](#), and dementia, have been found. Try to avoid consuming fatty meats, full-fat dairy products, margarine and products made with vegetable shortening, like store-bought cookies and crackers. Try to prepare these treats yourself at home, using low-fat alternatives like home-made applesauce instead of oil or butter, and healthy sweeteners like agave, instead of sugar.
- **[Low-salt foods](#):** An important link has been found between high salt intakes, high blood pressure and dementia. Try to consume less than one teaspoon of salt per day. Likewise, limit your alcohol intake and, if you're hooked, quit smoking! This dangerous habit narrows the arteries and promotes high blood pressure.
- ****Turmeric/Curcumin**:** Some areas in India have the lowest rates of dementia in the world – [research](#) indicates that it all has to do with turmeric/curcumin, that yellow, earthy spice that gives so many curries, rice dishes, dals and breads such a vibrant colour and beautiful flavour. Curcumin boasts powerful anti-oxidant, anti-inflammatory and lipophilic properties, and has been found to improve cognitive function in patients with dementia. In particular, curcumin has been proven to reduce the level of harmful Beta-amyloid plaques in the brain (these plaques have been found in the brains of patients with Alzheimer's), delay neuronal degradation and improve overall memory in patients with dementia. [Neurological disorders can develop over several years](#); it is therefore important to consume foods such as turmeric and green, leafy anti-oxidants since one's childhood, in order to approach dementia from a preventive perspective. Having said that, curcumin can benefit even those who have already been diagnosed with the disease.
- ****The Importance of Exercise**:** In addition to consuming these foods, it is important to include exercise into your daily routine. Exercise lowers cholesterol and regulates your blood pressure, making it an excellent back-up to a sound nutritional plan, particularly on days when you may have splurged on a naughty treat.

## A Tasty Recipe with Turmeric: Easy Indian Styled Rice

If you'd like to incorporate brain boosting curcumin into your diet but you don't know where to start, why not try this easy-to-prepare recipe, which even the youngest ones in the family will gulp down to the very last grain!

### Ingredients (Serves four):

- 1 tablespoon coconut oil
- 1 ½ cup basmati rice
- 410 ml low fat coconut milk
- 410 ml chicken or beef stock
- 1 teaspoon turmeric powder
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 pinch crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 teaspoon Himalayan salt
- 1 small bay leaf
- ½ cup yellow raisins
- ½ cup pine nuts (optional – can be substituted with cashew nuts)

### Cooking Instructions:

Heat the oil over medium heat. Add rice and coat in the oil. Heat for around two minutes. Pour in the coconut milk, stock, turmeric, coriander, red pepper flakes, salt and pine nuts. Bring to a gentle boil, and reduce heat to low. Cook until rice is tender (around 15 to 20 minutes). Garnish with cilantro or parsley.