

# COSMO Body love

WHO DOESN'T WANT TO BE HOT, HEALTHY & HAPPY?

## The truth about hipster treats

**Nutritional superheroes or overpriced fads? Lou Cheung bites into trending foods**

\* I'm not proud to admit it, but I went into a healthfood store recently and asked if they stocked vanilla powder. The lady there paused a second then laughed at me: it was the first she'd heard of it since opening shop 18 years ago. But I'd seen it and it sounded good – and I was willing to pay for it.

It's tempting to buy into food trends – or perhaps we're just hooked by them because some marketing guru spotted a gap to fill. By the end of 2013, for example, the coconut water market is predicted to be worth \$700 million in the US. Here at *Cosmo*, we've asked no-bullsh!t nutritionists about the top trending snacks, to find out which are worth buying and which are fads. ➔

In 2012, a Choice review of the claimed health benefits of coconut water brands concluded that drinking plain water and eating fruit and veg offered similar benefits.





## Activated almonds

Last year, celebrity chef Pete Evans spoke publicly about his fancy diet (he and his kids eat no dairy, wheat, sugar, gluten or yeast). His phrase “activated almonds” sent Twitter abuzz.

But what are they? It means the nuts have been soaked in rock-salted water overnight to release good-for-you enzymes, then roasted at less than 65°C for up to 24 hours.

It’s supposed to make them easier to digest. But nutritionist Ai Jerome just chooses raw, seasonal nuts.

“All nuts, activated or not, are packed with protein, fibre, vitamins and minerals (such as vitamin B and calcium), antioxidants (such as vitamin E), and heart-healthy fats,” she says. “They’re rich in monounsaturated fats, which lower bad cholesterol, and they keep your blood vessels healthy and your blood pressure down.”

### Verdict:

Activate nuts or eat ‘em raw, but just having them in your diet is a good thing. About 30g a day will do. Add slivered almonds, toasted pine nuts or walnuts to salad to increase protein and fibre.



## Kale chips

Kale is really just trendy cabbage, but experts say it deserves its “superfood” status. No sht, right? Dark, green and leafy = good. We’re acing this class.

Kale provides vitamins A, K and C, and is packed with iron and calcium. “It’s high in antioxidants, including carotenoids and flavenoids, which are associated with helping prevent cancers,” says Jerome. “And it’s rich in lutein and zeaxanthin compounds, which promote eye health.”

So should I go eat a bag of kale chips right now? Not so much. Chips tend to be baked or fried, which makes them delicious but not nutritious. For instance, a cup of potato chips contains eight grams of fat while a cup of kale chips contains seven grams.

“It’s OK as a sometimes food, but don’t see it as a way of getting your five serves of vegies a day,” says Jerome.

### Verdict:

Kale *is* good for you – but ditch the chips and eat it raw, steamed or stir-fried. Sprinkle it with lemon juice or munch with tomatoes – the vitamin C will help you absorb the kale’s iron.



## Quinoa (pronounced “keen-wah”)

Quinoa is a protein-rich grain from South America which has been trendy in Australia for about five years.

The white variety was first on hipster plates, but it’s now been joined by red and black quinoa. Royal pearl quinoa is the hippest of the grains: it’s closer to couscous in flavour, and is bigger and crunchier.

Nutritionally, there’s not much difference between them – although naturopath and nutritionist Emma Sutherland says you might want to start with the white version, because it’s the mildest tasting. “Quinoa is a complete protein, like meat, so it’s the perfect replacement for Meat-Free Mondays,” says Sutherland. “Optimise your omega-3 intake and pair quinoa with grilled fish, or add it to salad to boost your vitamin E intake.”

### Verdict:

It’s a protein hit and it’s gluten-free. Add it to soups, salads, stir-fries and casseroles, or mix with nuts and fruits to have as porridge. Also toss it in the mix when baking bread or muffins.

# Two bonus hipster treats to love

\* **Raw cacao nibs** “Eating raw cacao will increase blood flow to the brain, specifically to the areas responsible for learning and memory,” says Sutherland. “Plus it’s a good source of antioxidants, reduces insulin resistance, and is really good for heart health.” Add it to smoothies and trail mix, or sprinkle on plain yoghurt.

\* **Pink rock salt** Unlike table salt, pink rock salt is unprocessed, sourced naturally and contains 84 trace minerals. “Table salt often has anti-caking agents and preservatives added to it,” explains nutritionist Lola Berry. “Sea salt and rock salt are good, but it’s the pink variety that’s the Rolls Royce of salt.” **COSMO**