

# COSMOPOLITAN

## 29 Aphrodisiac Foods That Can Affect Your Sex Drive

You probably eat a bunch every day without even knowing it.

*By Carina Hsieh  
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While you might've heard in passing that oysters are aphrodisiacs, there are also a ton of other less-exotic foods rumored to have aphrodisiac qualities that you probably eat every day (no offense to the daily oyster crowd).

It's also important to note that not everyone will respond to aphrodisiac foods the same way. Marta Montenegro, a Miami-Fla.-based nutrition fertility lifestyles specialist at [IVFMD](#), explains that men might look for proteins and fats to boost alertness, while women turn to carbohydrates to calm nerves and relax.

Here, experts get real about some of the most popular rumored aphrodisiacs and some foods that might actually lessen your sex drive.

### **Maca**

According to Jenni Skyler, PhD, LMFT and CST is an [AASECT](#) certified sex therapist, sexologist, and licensed marriage and family therapist for [AdamEve.com](#), "Maca, the Incan root that is made into a popular tea, is also

known as Peru's 'natural Viagra.' and is thought to increase energy, stamina, fertility, and libido."

Montenegro notes that the verdict isn't in yet on scientific research for Maca, however, "the plant's roots are rich in magnesium and fiber which are good for improving stamina and well-being."

### **Pumpkin**

Marta Montenegro MS, MF, CSCS, SFN, NSCA-CPT, a Miami-Fla.-based nutrition fertility lifestyles specialist at IVFMD, explains that pumpkin is high in fiber and has potassium, "both good for stamina" as well as magnesium which can help calm nerves and muscles.

### **Champagne**

Steve McGough, who has a doctorate in sexology and a BS in biochemistry suggests that champagne as an aphrodisiac has more to do with getting in the mood for a special occasion than for the actual science behind the bubbles. In fact, he adds, "Studies have shown that for women, limited amounts of alcohol can increase subjective desire and potentially lower inhibitions. Larger amounts or chronic consumption can reduce libido and overall health."

### **Celery**

McGough says that celery contains small amounts of androstenone, which is a male pheromone that women can find attractive in men. No word on how much celery you'd have to eat to start sweating love potion, but hey, if you have the time.

### **Garlic**

It's a fact that garlic absolutely slaps in flavor and if you're chill with your partner's garlic breath, it might do wonders for you in the bedroom too. According to McGough, Garlic is high in allicin which increases blood flow and overall cardiovascular wellness.

### **Pine Nuts**

If a guy is zinc deficient, pine nuts can help increase their libido. Explains McGough, pine nuts also contain a variety of other health oils and phytochemicals that promote overall health and in turn, can potentially increase libido.

### **Ginseng**

Studies have found Asian and American varieties of the Ginseng herb to help libido and sexual performance. Dr. Josh Axe, D.N.M, C.N.S., D.C. explains, "Ginseng likely affects the central nervous system, altering hormones in the process."

### **Apples**

McGough, adds that apples have also been associated with increased sex drive. A 2014 study suggested that eating an apple a day correlated with better sexual quality of life in young women.

### **Saffron**

McGough also notes that there's some impressive evidence for saffron's effect on sex drive. Saffron's history as an aphrodisiac dates back to Cleopatra, who reportedly bathed in saffron-infused milk for its aphrodisiac qualities. Recent studies have also shown that saffron also helps increase sperm motility in

infertile men and can decrease some of the sexual side effects from taking certain antidepressants.

### **Hot Chilies**

Diana Hoppe, an MD and author of *Healthy Sex Drive, Healthy You: What Your Libido Reveals About Your Life*, says capsaicin, the stuff responsible for making chili peppers spicy, stimulates nerve endings on the tongue, which releases epinephrine (adrenaline) — the chemical that increases your heart rate and releases endorphins (natural opiates found in your body). Just make sure you're eating them and not actually just, like, rubbing chili pepper on your partner's body — the shit will sting.

### **Figs**

Not only do figs look sexy (anyone else completely unable to eat Fig Newtons the same way after seeing a halved fig for the first time, or just me?), Dr. Hoppe says they're also thought to be a sexual stimulant, as they're high in amino acids, which boost sexual stamina and increase libido.

### **Asparagus**

The high amount of vitamin E in asparagus can increase blood and oxygen flow to the genitals, Dr. Hoppe explains. There are also high levels of potassium — which is linked to sex hormone production. Plus, if the suggestive phallic shape of things also helps get you in the mood, then hey, good for you!

### **Avocados**

A sexy fun fact about your favorite \$2 add on at Chipotle: The Aztec word for avocado is "ahuacatl," which means "testicle." But besides the sex-thetic

appeal, Dr. Hoppe says avocados also contain high levels of folic acid, vitamin B9 (provides the body with more energy) and vitamin B6 (which helps increase testosterone production).

### **Bananas**

Your least favorite phallic fruit to eat in public, Dr. Hoppe says bananas contain bromelain enzyme — believed to increase a man's sex drive — as well as high levels of potassium, riboflavin, and vitamin B2 (supes important to keep your energy levels up while you bone).

### **Chocolate**

According to Dr. Hoppe, chocolate contains phenylethylamine — a stimulant that elicits excitement and a sense of well-being. The natural caffeine doesn't hurt either. Make sure to get dark chocolate that's at least 75 percent cacao to get the heart bennies too.

### **Oysters**

Urban legend has it that Casanova once seduced a virgin by sliding an oyster from his lips to hers. Yum, because what about communal seafood just *doesn't* scream seductive? Dr. Hoppe says these puppies contain tons of zinc — a mineral important in the production of testosterone and sperm production. Plus, they contain dopamine, a brain chemical that increases desire.

### **Pomegranates**

What can't this superfood do (besides not cost an arm and a leg)? Poms are hella full of antioxidants, which are important to decrease inflammation and plaque from building in your arteries, and help deliver more blood flow to all

areas of your body, including your genitals. Dr. Hoppe adds that there have also been some studies that suggest pomegranate juice may be helpful with erectile dysfunction (for that \$8/bottle price tag, it better, honestly).

### **Red Wine**

Not only can it help you get in the mood, the resveratrol in red wine is a powerful antioxidant, which, again, helps decrease inflammation and helps quite literally get your blood pumping.

### **Salmon**

Dr. Hoppe says salmon is high in omega-3 fatty acids, which is important not only for heart health (hence: why you keep seeing it all over vitamin bottles) but also helps your libido, by supplying the building blocks for production of estrogen, testosterone, and progesterone.

### **Almonds/Walnuts**

Not only have these been a symbol of fertility in art forever, they're a prime source of beneficial fatty acids like omega-3, which, again, help with hormone production. Dr. Hoppe also adds that the aroma of almonds is purported to arouse passion in women.

### **Vanilla**

Vanilla doesn't just smell sexy, Dr. Hoppe says it can also create an overall calming effect. No wonder all those late-night scoops of vanilla feel so damn good.

### **Watermelon**

Besides conjuring up sexy memories of summer flings gone by, watermelon is also high in citruline, a phytonutrient, Dr. Hoppe says, that increases the amount of nitric acid in the body, which in turn increases blood flow, blood vessel relaxation, and sexual arousal.

### **Honey**

TBT to ancient Greece, when Hippocrates used to prescribe honey for sexual vigor. This “liquid gold,” as Dr. Hoppe calls it, contains boron, which helps regulate hormone levels and nitric oxide (which helps increase blood flow during arousal). Nitric oxide also helps open up blood vessels involved in creating erections and clitoral engorgement.

### **Coffee**

Similarly to chocolate, coffee’s caffeine increases stamina and can elevate mood (because who could be happy while struggling to keep their eyes open?). Dr. Hoppe also adds that coffee increases dopamine levels in the brain, the stuff that increases desire and pleasure.

### **Strawberries**

While the legend says that strawberries originated from the heart-shaped tears of Aphrodite after she learned of her lover, Adonis’s death, modern-day strawberries are anything but a bummer. Dr. Hoppe says they’re loaded with vitamin C, which is important for the production of sex hormones and chemical neurotransmitters in the brain to increase libido. Plus, vitamin C can help keep your immune system up.

### **Cherries**

Another sexy fruit! Not only do they contain potassium and vitamin C, Dr. Hoppe explains that they also contain anthocyanins (the stuff responsible for giving them their red color), powerful antioxidants that reduce inflammation and help maintain a healthy sex drive.

### **Whipped Cream**

Just kidding! If anyone says this, they're a liar. Dr. Hoppe says there's no evidence of its aphrodisiac qualities (sorry, Josh from freshman year, you were wrong!), although she does mention that the light creamy texture could make for some creative love making scenarios. Either way, you do you.

### **Not an Aphrodisiac: Microwave Popcorn**

Axe explains that the chemicals found in the lining of microwavable popcorn bags and non-stick pots and pans, PFOA, have been linked to lower sperm counts in men.

### **Not an Aphrodisiac: Dairy Products**

Axe says that dairy products like milk and cheese from cow's milk can have synthetic hormones in them that can negatively affect estrogen and testosterone levels.