

Being Alive

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*Check Out The
Healing Power of
Holy Basil Tea*

The star of this herbal tea is *holy basil*.

In Ayurvedic medicine, holy basil is classified as a *Rasayana*, or an herb that promotes overall health and boosts one's longevity. For three thousand years, tea from this herb has been prepared daily and is believed to help balance the chakras, or energy centers in the body.

Known as *tulsi* in India, holy basil is referred to as the "elixir of life" and can be found growing around the most revered Hindu shrines and temples. Energizing and delicious, this fix-all has found its way into many surrounding cultures, including those of Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

The herb has withstood the scrutiny of science as well. Holy basil is rich in antioxidants, is extremely detoxifying, regulates the adrenal system making it an effective anti-stress tonic, and possesses unusually high levels of the essential fatty acid, *alpha-linolenic acid*, which is a proven anti-inflammatory.

Long story short, holy basil is good for you!

Holy Basil Tea Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1 cup water
- ¼ tsp fennel seeds
- ¼ tsp cumin
- ½ tsp cloves
- ⅓ tsp green cardamom, crushed
- 1-2 tsp of tulsi (holy basil)
- Wild honey to taste

Preparation

- Put all ingredients in a small pot and simmer for 20 minutes.
- Strain into a mug or cup and enjoy.

This tea can be enjoyed hot or iced, so you can harness the healing power of holy basil all year round!

A little secret: in our house, we love adding a little oat milk or almond milk to this brew, after the tea has steeped. It's so good!

*The Number One
Way We Intake
Toxins*

In our modern world, companies are cutting corners so that they can push more product out and make a higher profit. Some of these things are obvious like: pesticides, flame retardant sprays on couches and preservatives in almost all of our food.

But the #1 way that we are taking in toxins is through the substance that we need most as human beings: **our water**.

And there are 2 main ways this is happening.

1. Bottled Water

Did you know it is estimated that Americans alone purchase about 42.6 billion bottles of water per year?

What you might not know is that each of these bottles contains toxins that have been scientifically proven to have a negative effect on our health.

Bisphenol A (BPA) is the chemical compound that big companies use in their factories to shape plastic and make seals for the inside of cans. This toxin has been sneaking into our daily lives since the 60's and most people don't even give it a second thought.

The dangers of BPAs were exposed by the FDA. They have reported that BPAs, as well as PVC—which is sometimes used to make plastic more durable—negatively affect your overall health because they severely disrupt the endocrine system. Meddling with hormones and neurotransmitters in the body sets off a chain reaction that can alter mood, brain chemistry, development of babies, infants and children. It can increase blood pressure, cause infertility and could even provoke cancer cells.

Here are some easy ways to avoid these toxins:

- Check labels and make sure that the plastic products you purchase are BPA free.
- Choose fresh produce over canned.
- Choose ceramic or glass over plastic as often as possible.

Another way that we get our water is from the tap.

2. Tap Water

If you are experiencing an unpleasant aftertaste when drinking from your tap, you may have toxic metals, antimicrobials or contaminants from rainwater runoff making their way into your system every day.

If you have an older home, be sure to check the plumbing often. Rusty pipes are the main cause of toxic metal exposure, especially lead. Steady exposure to lead can lead to lasting issues like changes in mental health and an array of digestive ailments.

Disinfectants that are added to water at treatment plants are another culprit. Chlorine may kill microbes, but when mixed in with organic matter, it leaves a train of cancer causing disinfectant byproducts.

*The Number One Way
We Intake Toxins
(continued)*

You know all those drains you see on the side of the road? Have you ever wondered where the water goes? The answer is straight into the river, through the water treatment plant and back into people's homes.

Herb and pesticides have been found in tap water due to these rain gutters and through irrigation runoff from farms. Exposure to pesticides can lead to short term illness like diarrhea or stomach cramps, but can also lead to more serious problems like cancer or respiratory illnesses.

Though your city is required to check for and notify you of any illnesses that can be caused by bacteria in the water, **here are the easiest ways to protect yourself from these toxins:**

- Get your water tested.
- Install a water filter on all of your sinks and shower heads.

IMPORTANT: Because toxins are so rampant in our modern world - and almost impossible to avoid completely - I strongly recommend that you also embrace lifestyle choices that help to detoxify your body on a regular basis.

Your organs know how to detoxify themselves naturally, but when they become overloaded with poisons like the ones above, they get backed up and can fail entirely.



No Bake Apple Pie Bars

These 5 Ingredient Gluten Free and Vegan No Bake Apple Pie Bars are a Copycat recipe of Larabar's Apple Pie Bars. There's no added sugar and they're Keto. They taste so good, you'd never guess they're made of just fruit and nuts. The best part is that they're so quick and easy to make. I let them set in fridge then cut and individually wrap them with tin foil. There's something about unwrapping them that makes it feel more special.

You need a food processor to make this recipe. If you don't already have a food processor, you can pick up a small one up for \$10 - \$15 and most Chain Stores. These bars are so good that I had to make a second batch because the first ones got eaten up before I could get pictures.

Have you tried this other Healthy Gluten free and Vegan Oven [Baked Apple Pie Paper Roll](#) Recipe yet? They're so simple and satisfying.

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 Cups Crushed Almonds
- 2 Cups Dates
- 1 1/2 Cups Dried Apples
- 1 Cup Walnuts
- 3 Tsp Cinnamon

Directions

1. In a food processor, very finely grind the almonds. Add them to a large mixing bowl. Then grind down the dates into a paste like texture. Add to the mixing bowl and mix with the almonds until its completely combined. I used my hands, squishing it between my fingers.
2. Grind up the dried apple very finely, then add it to the bowl. Next grind up the walnuts and add them to the bowl too. Add the cinnamon and mix until it's fully combined.
3. Pour the mixture evenly into a 9x9 pan. Cover with parchment paper or plastic wrap. Press down on the bars with your fingers until the entire pan is compressed.
4. Place into the No Bake Apple Pie Bars in the refrigerator for 1 hour. Cut into bars.

This recipe makes 12 No Bake Apple Pie Bars.



Sleep and Mental

Health

Sleep deprivation can affect your mental health

Sleep and mental health are closely connected. Sleep deprivation affects your psychological state and mental health. And those with mental health problems are more likely to have insomnia or other sleep disorders.

Americans are notoriously sleep deprived, but those with psychiatric conditions are even more likely to be yawning or groggy during the day. Chronic sleep problems affect 50% to 80% of patients in a typical psychiatric practice, compared with 10% to 18% of adults in the general U.S. population. Sleep problems are particularly common in patients with anxiety, [depression](#), bipolar disorder, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Traditionally, clinicians treating patients with psychiatric disorders have viewed insomnia and other sleep disorders as symptoms. But studies in both adults and children suggest that sleep problems may raise risk for, and even directly contribute to, the development of some psychiatric disorders. This research has clinical application, because treating a sleep disorder may also help alleviate symptoms of a co-occurring mental health problem.

The brain basis of a mutual relationship between sleep and mental health is not yet completely understood. But neuroimaging and neurochemistry studies suggest that a good night's sleep helps foster both mental and emotional resilience, while chronic sleep deprivation sets the stage for negative thinking and emotional vulnerability.

Key points

- Sleep problems are more likely to affect patients with psychiatric disorders than people in the general population.
- Sleep problems may increase risk for developing particular mental illnesses, as well as result from such disorders.
- Treating the sleep disorder may help alleviate symptoms of the mental health problem.



Sleep and Mental

Health

(continued)

How sleep affects mental health

Every 90 minutes, a normal sleeper cycles between two major categories of sleep – although the length of time spent in one or the other changes as sleep progresses.

During "quiet" sleep, a person progresses through four stages of increasingly deep sleep. Body temperature drops, muscles relax, and [heart rate](#) and breathing slow. The deepest stage of quiet sleep produces physiological changes that help boost immune system functioning.

The other sleep category, REM (rapid eye movement) sleep, is the period when people dream. Body temperature, blood pressure, heart rate, and breathing increase to levels measured when people are awake. Studies report that REM sleep enhances learning and memory, and contributes to emotional health – in complex ways.

Although scientists are still trying to tease apart all the mechanisms, they've discovered that sleep disruption – which affects levels of neurotransmitters and stress hormones, among other things – wreaks havoc in the brain, impairing thinking and emotional regulation. In this way, [insomnia](#) may amplify the effects of psychiatric disorders, and vice versa.

Psychological effects of sleep deprivation

More than 70 types of sleep disorders exist. The most common problems are insomnia (difficulty falling or staying asleep), [obstructive sleep apnea](#) (disordered breathing that causes multiple awakenings), various movement syndromes (unpleasant sensations that prompt night fidgeting), and narcolepsy (extreme sleepiness or falling asleep suddenly during the day).

Type of sleep disorder, prevalence, and impact vary by psychiatric diagnosis. But the overlap between sleep disorders and various psychiatric problems is so great that researchers have long suspected both types of problems may have common biological roots.

Depression. Studies using different methods and populations estimate that 65% to 90% of adult patients with major depression, and about 90% of children with this disorder, experience some kind of sleep problem. Most patients with depression have insomnia, but about one in five suffer from obstructive sleep apnea.

Insomnia and other sleep problems also increase the risk of developing depression. A longitudinal study of about 1,000 adults ages 21 to 30 enrolled in a Michigan health maintenance organization found that, compared with normal sleepers, those who reported a history of insomnia during an interview in 1989 were four times as likely to develop major depression by the time of a second interview three years later. And two longitudinal studies in young people – one involving 300 pairs of young twins, and another including 1,014 teenagers – found that sleep problems developed before major depression did.

Sleep and Mental

Health

(continued)

Insomnia and other sleep problems affect outcomes for patients with depression. Studies report that depressed patients who continue to experience insomnia are less likely to respond to treatment than those without sleep problems. Even patients whose mood improves with antidepressant therapy are more at risk for a relapse of depression later on. Depressed patients who experience insomnia or other sleep disturbances are more likely to think about suicide and die by suicide than depressed patients who are able to sleep normally.

Bipolar disorder. Studies in different populations report that 69% to 99% of patients experience insomnia or report less need for sleep during a manic episode of bipolar disorder. In bipolar depression, however, studies report that 23% to 78% of patients sleep excessively (hypersomnia), while others may experience insomnia or restless sleep.

Longitudinal studies suggest that insomnia and other sleep problems worsen before an episode of mania or bipolar depression, and lack of sleep can trigger mania. Sleep problems also adversely affect mood and contribute to relapse.

Anxiety disorders. Sleep problems affect more than 50% of adult patients with generalized anxiety disorder, are common in those with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and may occur in panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and phobias. They are also common in children and adolescents. One sleep laboratory study found that youngsters with an anxiety disorder took longer to fall asleep, and slept less deeply, when compared with a control group of healthy children.

Insomnia may also be a risk factor for developing an anxiety disorder, but not as much as it is for major depression. In the longitudinal study of teenagers mentioned earlier, for example, sleep problems preceded anxiety disorders 27% of the time, while they preceded depression 69% of the time.

But insomnia can worsen the symptoms of anxiety disorders or prevent recovery. Sleep disruptions in PTSD, for example, may contribute to a retention of negative emotional memories and prevent patients from benefiting from fear-extinguishing therapies.

ADHD. Various sleep problems affect 25% to 50% of children with ADHD. Typical problems include difficulty falling asleep, shorter sleep duration, and restless slumber. The symptoms of ADHD and sleeping difficulties overlap so much it may be difficult to tease them apart. Sleep-disordered breathing affects up to 25% of children with ADHD, and restless legs syndrome or periodic limb movement disorder, which also disrupt sleep, combined affect up to 36%. And children with these sleeping disorders may become hyperactive, inattentive, and emotionally unstable — even when they do not meet the diagnostic criteria for ADHD.

Sleep and Mental

Health

(continued)

Sleep and mental health lifestyle changes

In some respects, the treatment recommended for the most common sleep problem, insomnia, is the same for all patients, regardless of whether they also suffer from psychiatric disorders. The fundamentals are a combination of lifestyle changes, behavioral strategies, psychotherapy, and drugs if necessary.

Lifestyle changes. Most people know that caffeine contributes to sleeplessness, but so can alcohol and nicotine. Alcohol initially depresses the nervous system, which helps some people fall asleep, but the effects wear off in a few hours and people wake up. Nicotine is a stimulant, which speeds heart rate and thinking. Giving up these substances is best, but avoiding them before bedtime is another option.

Physical activity. Regular aerobic activity helps people fall asleep faster, spend more time in deep sleep, and awaken less often during the night.

Sleep hygiene. Many experts believe that people learn insomnia, and can learn how to sleep better. Good "sleep hygiene" is the term often used to include tips like maintaining a regular sleep-and-wake schedule, using the bedroom only for sleeping or sex, and keeping the bedroom dark and free of distractions like the computer or television. Some experts also recommend sleep retraining: staying awake longer in order to ensure sleep is more restful.

Relaxation techniques. [Meditation](#), guided imagery, deep breathing exercises, and progressive muscle relaxation (alternately tensing and releasing muscles) can counter anxiety and racing thoughts.

Cognitive behavioral therapy. Because people with insomnia tend to become preoccupied with not falling asleep, cognitive behavioral techniques help them to change negative expectations and try to build more confidence that they can have a good night's sleep. These techniques can also help to change the "blame game" of attributing every personal problem during the day on lack of sleep.



Most and Least Stressed States

Stress affects everyone. Although we cannot eliminate stress entirely from our lives, we can minimize it by choosing to live in the least toxic environments. American stress levels [have been rising](#) for many demographics since their low point in 2016. Common stressors include the future of America and money, along with [health insurance costs](#). But not all demographics are affected in the same way. For example, millennials have the [highest average stress levels](#). But certain states have contributed more than others to elevating – or decreasing – stress levels in the U.S. WalletHub compared the 50 states across 40 key indicators of stress to determine the places to avoid and achieve a more relaxing life. Our data set ranges from average hours worked per week to personal bankruptcy rate to share of adults getting adequate sleep. Read on for our findings, expert insight from a panel of researchers and our full methodology. [Ask the Experts](#)

For the best ways to cope with negative stressors, we turned to a panel of experts. You can read their bios and thoughts on the following key questions below.

1. What tips do you have for fighting stress without spending money?
2. What steps can people take to reduce stressing over finances?
3. Should insurance companies cover treatments that help reduce stress?
4. What tips do you have for parents trying to minimize stress in their children?

Methodology

In order to determine the most and least stressed states, WalletHub compared the 50 states across four key dimensions: 1) Work-Related Stress, 2) Money-Related Stress, 3) Family-Related Stress, 4) Health- & Safety-Related Stress. We evaluated those dimensions using 40 relevant metrics, which are listed below with their corresponding weights. Each metric was graded on a 100-point scale, with a score of 100 representing the highest level of stress. We then determined each state's weighted average across all metrics to calculate its overall score and used the resulting scores to rank-order our sample.



*Most and Least
Stressed States*

(continued)

Work-Related Stress - Total Points: 25

- Average Hours Worked per Week: Double Weight (-5.88 Points)
- Average Commute Time: Half Weight (-1.47 Points)
- Average Leisure Time Spent per Day: Full Weight (-2.94 Points)
- Job Security: Full Weight (-2.94 Points)
- Unemployment Rate: Double Weight (-5.88 Points)
- Underemployment Rate: Full Weight (-2.94 Points)
- Income Growth Rate (2017 vs. 2016): Full Weight (-2.94 Points)

Money-Related Stress - Total Points: 25

- Median Income: Double Weight (-3.85 Points)
- Debt per Median Earnings: Full Weight (-1.92 Points)
- Median Credit Score: Full Weight (-1.92 Points)
- Personal Bankruptcy Rate: Double Weight (-3.85 Points)
- Share of Adults Worried about Money: Double Weight (-3.85 Points)
Note: This metric measures the percentage of state residents who report having worried about money in the last seven days.
- Economic Confidence Index: Full Weight (-1.92 Points)
Notes: Gallup's Economic Confidence Index is based on state residents' views of economic conditions in the U.S. today, and whether they think economic conditions in the country are getting better or getting worse.
- Share of People Unable to Save for Children's College: Full Weight (-1.92 Points)
- Share of Adults Paying Only Minimum on Credit Card(s): Full Weight (-1.92 Points)
- Share of Population Living in Poverty: Full Weight (-1.92 Points)
- Housing Affordability: Full Weight (-1.92 Points)
Note: This metric was calculated as follows: Housing Costs (accounts for both rental and sale prices) / Median Annual Household Income.

Continue reading

<https://wallethub.com/edu/most-stressful-states/32218/>

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