

The Benefits Of Seaweed For Skin & Body



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Ireland has a long tradition of eating and using seaweed going back more than 900 years. As an island surrounded by beautiful oceans, it's no surprise. Nature is so giving and abundant, we have all we need all around us. This plentiful **nutrient dense resource** can nourish us from head to toe inside and out.

In recent years there has been a very enthusiastic revival of using seaweeds in Western cultures. You don't want to consume too much, a little and often is best. Start with about 2-3% of your total food intake and work up gradually to 10% comparable to Asia. At BiaBeo we're all about [natural healing](#) and we've researched the benefits of consuming seaweed to improve health and reverse the negative effects of a bad diet.

Seaweed Nutrition

Seaweeds are high in vitamins and minerals, 10-20 times more than land plants, they contain similar amino acids to eggs and lentils. It's a true superfood providing lots of nutrients with very

similar amino acids to eggs and lentils. It's a true superfood providing lots of nutrients with very little calories. Seaweeds are very beneficial for a vegan diet, due to being **high in amino acids**, iron and other minerals.

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Some Facts about Seaweed

Seaweed is the fastest growing organism on the planet, growing up to two ft per day, making it a very sustainable resource. They can keep up with consumption for the planet and when dried they keep their nutritional profile for 10yrs.

Seaweeds are great food medicine and very valuable to utilize for [Women's health](#), especially with helping to support times of transition in a Woman's life where we need extra nourishment. The age we live in now, we need the nourishment from Seaweed more than ever. With the reducing mineral content in our soil, we are lacking minerals that our ancestors would have found in high levels in the food they would eat. We just aren't getting enough from our food these days even if eating totally organic.



How to Consume Seaweed

A variety of colours is best so you get a good mix of nutrients. Reds such as *Dulse* and *Irish Moss* (Carrageen) are mostly antiviral and protect against intestinal parasites. You wouldn't want to be consuming too much as they could be too strong on the body in higher doses due to the **antimicrobial action**, consuming about 1-2% in daily diet is optimum. They are commonly used in contraceptives to block STI's and used as thickeners in foods and body products.

The brown seaweeds such as the [Kelps](#) seem to help to address today's health issues. They help fight Cancer cells. They help flag these cells to the immune system. They have been shown to be helpful in conjunction with conventional cancer treatment and do not interfere with the cancer treatments. These brown seaweeds contain alginates which act like a toxin sponge for heavy metals and cleanses the GI tract and colon, it moves toxins out of the body. This makes them very useful for helping address **hormonal imbalances, stress**, lack of [nutrition](#), environmental toxicity build up, and fatty liver – they dispel fat deposits from the liver where it is due from a high carb/sugar diet.

All seaweeds contain iodine – brown has most and reds have the least amount specifically Nori – so this is good to keep in mind if dealing with Hashimotos/Hypothyroid where you would want a lower iodine content. Iodine is used and accumulated in the breasts, ovaries, testicles and colon and helps to protect against absorbing toxins in these areas especially protecting against xenoestrogens.

How Seaweed Helps The Planet and Us

In the same way, Seaweeds help nourish us they also nourish our planet. They are the oceans and the earth's cleansers; they remove radioactive isotopes and heavy metals from the ocean, they also de-acidify the ocean and reduce carbon emissions in the atmosphere. They are regenerative and help heal the planet. They remineralise the earth when washed up on shore and make a really great fertilizer. It feeds the soil and protects against weeds and pests like slugs. You can use it as mulch on your growing beds.

What About Toxins In Seaweed?

With regard to the safety of seaweeds and the toxins it absorbs – If seaweed is left out to dry for 60 days the toxins evaporate, but this is only a concern if the seaweed is harvested from a heavily polluted area. All seaweed you will purchase will be quality controlled so won't be an issue. You just need to take caution when harvesting yourself, you want to avoid places close to industry and

cities, and make sure you are doing it sustainably. Just trimming it and not pulling it out from where it is rooted. A lot of green seaweed in an area means that the area they are in is heavily polluted as green seaweeds are heavy feeders and will be plentiful in a very polluted area. It's better to have an area with all the colours; reds, greens, and browns. Greens and reds are similar in action, they are immune modulating, helping with overactive and underactive immune systems and help to bring balance. Helpful for autoimmune disorders.

Further information: The Irish Seaweed Kitchen – full of wisdom, folklore, and recipes.

Seaweed Benefits & Side Effects

Seaweeds are commonly used in cosmetics and as organic fertilisers. Seaweed baths have been popular in Ireland and Britain since Edwardian times, and seaweed wraps and treatments have become very popular in the last few years.

Seaweed can benefit your health in many ways: using it topically or internally are both safe and effective applications. When eating seaweed it's best to have it a little and often instead of eating large quantities all at once. Due to the fact that it is a potent source of Iodine, a little caution is needed to avoid harming your thyroid. A small amount is beneficial for thyroid health but too much can have a bad effect. Iodine is a micronutrient that's hard to come by in most foods, it helps support thyroid and brain health. It has been commonly added to table salt in recent years to help with the lack of it in the general diet. But a much better and healthier alternative is to add this super healthy sea vegetable to your diet to fulfil your iodine needs. Eat about a gram of seaweed and your daily iodine needs are taken care of.

More caution is needed for people on blood-thinning medications such as Warfarin as Seaweed is rich in Vitamin K which will further thin the blood. Similarly, people with Kidney problems need to take extra care as Seaweed is high in potassium and can cause nausea and weakness for these individuals due to the fact that their kidneys can no longer remove excess potassium from the body.

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Nutritional Content of Seaweed

Seaweeds are full of nutrients. They are a **rich source of calcium, copper, iodine and iron**. It is also a good source of Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Vitamin E, Vitamin K, Niacin, Pantothenic Acid and Phosphorus, and a great source of Riboflavin, Folate, Magnesium & Manganese. It also contains a good amount of Vitamin B12, making it a great option for Vegans & Vegetarians. The calcium content is higher than broccoli and protein content almost as rich as legumes. The high soluble fibre content in this nutrient-dense dark leafy vegetable helps to slow down the digestive process

more content in this nutrient-dense dark leafy vegetable helps to slow down the digestive process and helps to bring bad cholesterol out of the body reducing overall cholesterol levels and the risk of heart disease.



Seaweed Nutrition:

Typical Analysis of Carrageen seaweed – *Chondrus crispus*

Protein 11-18%

Fat 1-3%

Carbohydrates 55-66%

Vitamin C 10-30 ppm

Vitamin B12 0.6-4 ppm

Calcium 0.9-1.3 ppm

Iodine 200-300 ppm

Iron 170-210 ppm

Magnesium 6700-8351%

Manganese 2-28 ppm

Sodium 2-2.6%

Potassium 3.4 ppm

• **Carrageen** is a well known traditional Irish seaweed that was used to thicken puddings and soups and was often used to make a hot drink in the winter months to give a boost to the immune system during the cold Irish winters. Today it is very well known as an ingredient in syrups usually under the name of Irish Moss. It can be used in any recipe where you need a thickening action, it is a great option as it does not have any fishy taste.

Typical analysis of Dulse / Dillisk seaweed – *Palmaria Palmata*

Protein 12-21%

Fat 0.7-3%

Carbohydrates 46-50%

Vitamin C 150-280 ppm

Beta Carotene 663 i.u.

Vitamin B1 7 ppm

Vitamin B2 2-5 ppm

Vitamin B3 2-19 ppm

Vitamin B6 9 ppm

Vitamin B12 6.6 ppb

Vitamin E 1.71 ppm

Calcium 2,000-8,000 ppm

Iodine 150-550 ppm

Iron 56-350 ppm

Magnesium 0.2-0.5%

Manganese 10-155 ppm

Sodium 0.8-3%

Zinc 3 ppm

• **Dulse** is very tasty and was traditionally referred to as a “salty” snack in old Ireland. It can be used for enhancing the flavour in fish dishes and also can be added to flour for making pastas and breads.

Typical Analysis of Kombu (Kelp) – *Laminaria digitata*

Protein 8-14%

Fat 1%

Carbohydrates 48%

Vitamin C 12-18 ppm

Vitamin B1 5 ppm

Vitamin B2 22 ppm

Vitamin B3 34 ppm

Vitamin B9 34 ppm

Vitamin B12 0.6-0.12 ppm

Laminarine 0-18%

Mannitol 4-16%

Calcium 12,400-13,200 ppm

Iodine 800-5000 ppm

Iron 50-70 ppm

Magnesium 6,400-7,860 ppm

Manganese 1-16 ppm

Sodium 2-5.2%

- **Kelp** contains one of the highest amounts of Iodine which can help to boost energy, the taste is quite good and can be very helpful for the digestion of legumes when cooked together, it helps to neutralise the fermentation that can occur in the colon.

Typical analysis of Nori seaweed -*Porphyra umbilicalis*

Protein 15-37%

Fat 0.12-2.48%

Carbohydrates 50-76%

Vitamin C 130-1110 ppm

Beta Carotene 266-384 ppm

Vitamin B1 3-6 ppm

Vitamin B2 10-29 ppm

Vitamin B3 50-98 ppm

Vitamin B6 112 ppm

Vitamin B12 10-20 ppb

Vitamin E 5 i.u.

Calcium 2,000-8,000 ppm

Iodine 150-550 ppm

Iron 56-350 ppm

Magnesium 0.2-0.5%

Manganese 7-83 ppm

Sodium 0.5-3.2%

Zinc 41 ppm

- **Nori** is commonly used in Japanese cuisine, its rich in aminoacids, vitamins and minerals.

Typical analysis of Sea Spirulina seaweed – *Ulva lactuca spiralis*

Protein 10-18%

Fat 0.5-1.7%

Carbohydrates 48%
Vitamin C 40-122 ppm
Calcium 8200-9400 ppm
Iodine 70 ppm
Iron 152 ppm
Magnesium 2.6-2.8%
Manganese 1-12 ppm
Sodium 7.3-8.4%
Potassium 0.7 %

• **Sea Spirulina** is not the same as common Spirulina you find in health food shops, sea spirulina grows wild in our oceans, while spirulina you find in many health foods shops is actually reproduced artificially under special conditions. Sea Spirulina has a very special chlorophyll content making it unique in the vegetable kingdom, it is a rich source of Vitamin B12 and Magnesium. When powdered it can be used instead of salt.

Typical analysis of Sweet Kombu seaweed – *Saccharina latissima*

Protein 6-11%
Fat 0.5%
Carbohydrates 61%
Vitamin C 13-18 ppm
Calcium 8,910-9,282 ppm
Iodine 800-4500 ppm
Iron 22-40 ppm
Magnesium 5,670-6,944 ppm
Manganese 1-16 ppm
Sodium 3-3.4%

• **Sweet Kombu** as with all Kelps contain alginates which support the digestive system and help move toxins out of the body. It also has the advantage of preventing the unwanted fermentation of legumes in the digestive system when cooked together. It has a very nice flavour and is said to help with weight loss due to the Iodine content.

Typical analysis of Atlantic Wakame seaweed – *Alaria esculenta*

Protein 9-20%
Fat 1-2%
Carbohydrates 46-51%
Vitamin C 100-500 ppm
Carothen 4-5 ppm
Retinol 0.7-0.8 ppm

Vitamin B2 0.3-1 ppm

Vitamin B3 5 ppm

Vitamin B6 0.1 ppm

Vitamin B12 <5 ppb

Calcium 11,670-12,900 ppm

Iodine 165-275 ppb

Iron 50-126 ppm

Magnesium 8.960 ppm

Manganese <1-14 ppm

Sodium 4-6%

- The complex of vitamins and minerals in Wakame gives you all you need for the basis of a healthy diet. The taste of this particular seaweed has a very nice flavour acceptable to most.

Seaweed extract in Cosmetics for Skin

Seaweed is not only good for its nutritional value it can also help improve your skin. Seaweed cells are actually very similar to skin cells. They help to maintain the skin's natural balance of oils and protect it against irritation. Seaweeds are anti-inflammatory and have an anti-ageing effect on our skin and provide excellent hydration which is key to younger looking skin.

Many brands out there that use seaweeds in their ingredients, such as Lush, The Body Shop and St. Ives. They opt to use Seaweeds as a vital ingredient in many of their products due to how they moisturise, fight free radicals and tighten the skin.

Make sure when buying seaweed products that you are buying from companies that source their seaweed ethically. It's good to know where they are gathering their seaweed and how they are processing it. Seaweed supplies a huge amount of sea creatures with their food and nesting ground. Seaweed needs to be extracted by cutting it instead of pulling it completely off where it is attached. This ensures that the seaweed can grow back making it a sustainable resource and does not disturb marine life.

There are plenty of companies using seaweed as the main ingredient in their cosmetic and beauty care ranges, but one very lovely Irish company called **AlgAran** produces an all organic health and beauty range. AlgAran is situated in Malinmore, Glencolmcille, Southwest Donegal. They harvest their seaweed locally by hand in Connemara and on the Aran Islands, which are the cleanest shores in the world. To preserve its rich nutritional content the seaweed is rinsed on the shore when harvested and then dried at low temperatures. The variety of seaweeds they use in their products and source locally are **Carragheen, Dulse, Kelp, Nori, Sea Spaghetti, Sea Spirulina, Sweet Kombu and Wakame.**

The guarantees on the AlgAran website is what you should be looking for when deciding what seaweed products to buy.

- They only source their seaweed from clean shores and they process it within a few hours
- They have the maximum respect for the marine environment and they take the necessary precautions to ensure there is no possible contamination throughout the whole harvesting process.
- They have their processing and packaging registered with the health board and they conform with labelling laws.
- Their seaweed is freshly harvested and they only use Irish and local.
- Their seaweed contains no heavy metals and when processed they never exceed 30 degrees.

Seaweed Wrans