

Caffeine Alternatives

Complete guide to
kicking caffeine
addiction for good



Nutrition Path

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Caffeine alternatives



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Caffeine alternatives

The "Why"

We are in a metabolic 'energy crisis' and managing our energy and resources has become more important than ever before. With the amount of stress, distraction and to-do lists a modern person living in a city has to face during the day has increased massively in the last couple of decades and our bodies and minds are struggling to catch up.

Extreme energy fluctuations, chronic fatigue and unstable moods are just a few of the modern lifestyle imbalances that are keeping more and more people 'running on empty'.

Have you noticed your anxiety and stress levels continuously increasing? Do you feel like you couldn't get through the day without coffee?

Excessive consumption of coffee and caffeine is playing a huge part in creating energy fluctuations. Although it may seem like it's giving heaps of energy at first, it causes energy levels to crash eventually, leaving you exhausted and irritable...day after day.



The Science

Blood sugar balance

These energy, mood and concentration fluctuations are tightly connected to blood sugar balance. Coffee and caffeine affects the blood sugar by spiking at first, only to cause a huge crash later.

Blood sugar can get imbalanced by many factors, including stress, skipping meals, excessive sugar and alcohol in the diet, however caffeine can have an instant effect, especially consumed in excessive amounts. If you wake up with no energy, have a huge energy crash around 4pm or feel like you couldn't get through one day without coffee, chances are your blood sugar balance needs more attention.

On top of energy fluctuations and irritability, blood sugar imbalance can also fuel increased anxiety and stress levels. Research shows that being in this state for prolonged periods of time is 'bad news' and can lead to increased risk with Alzheimers, cancer and a long list of chronic disease.

Caffeine alternatives

Caffeine

Combined with a healthy diet and lifestyle, in small amounts caffeine normally isn't a problem (unless you are really sensitive to caffeine). However, there are a few other effects of caffeine to be wary about:

Absorption of minerals- consuming caffeine straight after a meal can compete with absorption of other minerals, such as calcium, iron and magnesium. Best to wait at least 45min after a meal to have a caffeinated drink.

Stomach irritation- caffeine can irritate the stomach lining, especially if drank first thing in the morning or on a completely empty stomach. It may also disturb smooth digestion.

Blood pressure- caffeine can increase blood pressure and heart rate. Hence if you have a stressful lifestyle and a high blood pressure already, it is a good idea to review your coffee intake.



Sleep disturbances- it is not a secret that caffeine will keep you awake and it takes up to 10h to leave the system. If you experience insomnia or other sleep disturbances, aim to have the last cup of coffee after lunch time for better quality sleep.

How about decaf?

Decaf coffee and tea contains much less caffeine than regular coffee and tea, as majority of caffeine has been removed. However small amount of caffeine is still left and if having large quantities of it daily, there is still some caffeine entering the system.

One thing to consider is that in order to remove caffeine, coffee or tea has been through harsh processing methods, which often use artificial chemicals or additives. Therefore, choose decaf coffee or tea that has none of these practices in the production method and come from organic sources.

Caffeine alternatives

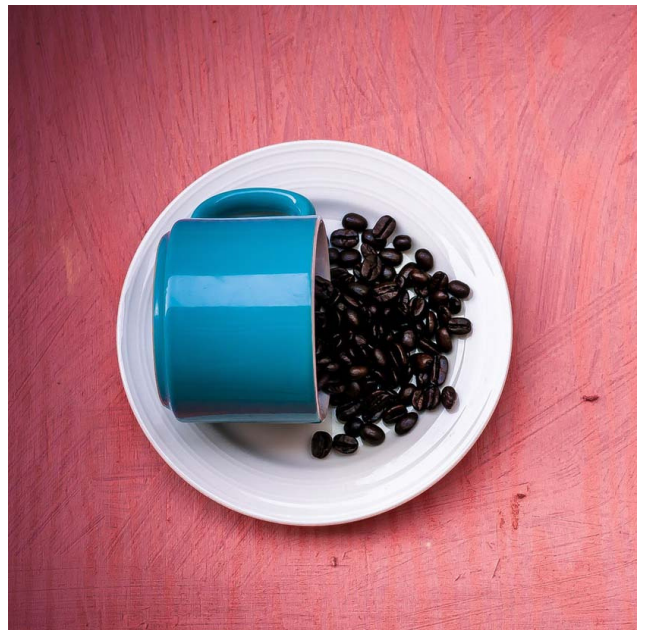
Science aside

How does coffee make me feel?

The question you want to ask is- how does coffee really make you feel? In the world of distraction and fast-moving pace, we get detached from the feelings and sensations in our bodies, until they become extreme. I urge you to spend a few days and really tune into what coffee gives you and how it makes you feel: at the time of drinking it, 15- 20 min after and 2-3h after drinking it. Is it REALLY giving you the energy or is it just continuously sucking it, keeping you in the loop of energy fluctuations and illusion of instant boost?

Why is coffee getting so much negative attention?

Simply put, it is not just coffee in itself. There are benefits around coffee and some good quality coffees that have as little processing as possible do include flavonoids- a type of antioxidants. The trouble is that coffee has become so widely available, that most of the time it is heavily processed, heat-treated and has barely any positive nutritional value left. In addition, we now know how it affects the blood sugar and if coffee is the only thing that 'gets you out of bed in the morning', be prepared to break the cycle and step into truly energized and healthy future.



Is it coffee or caffeine addiction?

Caffeine addiction is often associated with coffee only. Not everyone knows, that there is also caffeine in black tea, green tea, chocolate, energy drinks and some soft drinks.

Either way, caffeine is mildly addictive and withdrawals are often experienced when trying to break this relationship. Be prepared to expect fatigue, headaches, body aches, anxiety, mood swings and impaired focus while your body rebalances.

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Does that mean I can never drink coffee again?

Depriving yourself from coffee if you really like it is like being on a diet. It is proven that diets and restriction do not work. Feelings of deprivation backfire and result in bingeing on the exact same thing which was being avoided. Thinking that you 'cannot' drink coffee ever again is a very black and white attitude and the healthiest approach for the body and mind is:

EVERYTHING IN MODERATION

Make it a ritual and find your favourite place for coffee, limit yourself to amount of coffees you have per week or have it as a special treat. This will make it much more enjoyable and better for your overall wellbeing!



Caffeine alternatives

Alternatives to coffee and black tea

Yes, there is life after coffee! There are plenty of great alternatives out there that will give the same satisfaction as coffee does, it just needs a bit of patience and willingness to try. You might not yet know what you are missing out on by ditching coffee alternatives.

Step 1

Everyone is different and therefore not every alternative will be right. When choosing a suitable alternative, tune into what are your reasons for drinking coffee. Pause for a moment and ask yourself:

“Why do I drink coffee?”



Is it the energy boost that it gives? Perhaps the irresistible taste? Or is it simply a habit? Figuring out the real reason will fast-track your move away from the daily caffeine addiction and will help you satisfy that craving.

Step 2

Start replacing your daily coffee(s) with the alternatives below. There are a few suggestions for each of the main three reasons that coffee becomes an important part of daily routine. I encourage you to keep looking beyond these, as there are plenty of options out there.

Caffeine alternatives

Reason #1: Caffeine effect

Coffee is not the only drink containing caffeine. There are others that will create a similar effect, however without the huge blood sugar imbalance and crash afterwards (which in turn will cause energy levels to fluctuate and make you less resilient, tired and fatigued later).

Green tea

Containing some caffeine, green tea is a great alternative to coffee or black tea. It contains an amino acid ECGC, which helps increase focus and memory. Although green tea contains caffeine, but contrary to coffee it sustainably increases energy levels through a prolonged amount of time and the amino acids and antioxidants in the tea help keep you alert and focused for longer.



Matcha tea

Matcha tea might have become the newest trend in the past two years, but it is anything but a new discovery. Matcha has been around for centuries and is widely used in Asia for tea ceremonies. Its qualities are similar to a green tea, but matcha contains ten times the antioxidants than a regular green tea, which contributes towards vitality, improved heart health and delayed ageing. No wonder it has been used by Zen monks and called an 'elixir of immortals' for hundreds of years.

Yerba mate

This tea is made from South American yerba mate plant leaves. Although once again it contains some caffeine, yerba mate is rich in antioxidants (much more than regular green tea), aids smooth digestion and helps sustain healthy weight. Yerba mate also has calming qualities and helps manage anxiety and insomnia.

Chocolate tonic

Craving a coffee alternative that will make you jump out of bed with excitement?

Hot chocolate drinks are often too milky and sweet, but give cocoa a second chance and make a cocoa drink to fully experience the endless health benefits it has to offer. Cocoa powder contains an array of beneficial minerals such as iron and magnesium and together with its warming sensation is an excellent alternative to a cup of coffee in the morning. Find my favourite cocoa tonic recipe below.

Caffeine alternatives

Reason #2: Taste

For some of us the taste of fresh bitter coffee may simply be irresistible. Have a good quality decaf as an alternative or try out other, more adventurous alternatives. And if you decide that you don't like one or other thing after trying it once, my advice is to at least try it 3 times before making a final decision.

Chicory coffee

Made from root of chicory plant, chicory coffee is an excellent caffeine-free coffee substitute. Its bitter characteristics promote bile production, which in turn aids smooth digestion and supports the liver. Chicory coffee is excellent for keeping healthy cholesterol balance.

Dandelion root coffee

Another plant- derived bitter caffeine-free coffee substitute, which blends nicely with chicory coffee. Dandelion is widely recognized for its detoxing properties, liver support and nourishment. This root works as a tonic on the whole system, which helps build and purify the blood. Especially beneficial to support women's health and to those, who often have 'one too many' when it comes to alcohol.

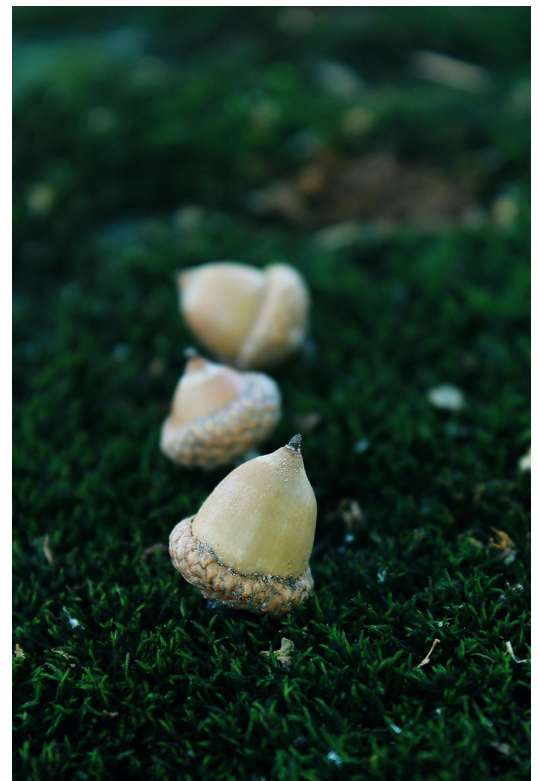
Acorn coffee

Acorn coffee tastes bit less like real coffee, but gives the same warming comforting feeling. This is a great coffee alternative if you often experience sugar cravings, as acorns help balance blood sugar levels and doesn't cause the spike in the first place (opposite to coffee).

Small, but mighty acorns also contain high amounts of vitamins, such as B vitamins that help boost energy and brain health.

Barley cup

Barley cup has become a well- known coffee substitute brand. This instant drink somewhat reminds a mild coffee and is gluten-free for those sensitive to grains. Suitable to drink for all ages as contains no caffeine, so is an excellent alternative to the little ones. Barley cup also helps sustain healthy weight and promotes weightloss, as it contains some fibre that is necessary for smooth and balanced digestion.



Caffeine alternatives

Reason #3: Habit

Coffee is so widely available at home, in the office and when out to visit friends, that it can become just a habit to always say yes to coffee. Really ask yourself does coffee give you an excuse to have a break? Or perhaps it gives you a comfort of a warm drink? Well, there are numerous alternatives for that...

Infused water

If making a drink at certain times at work or at home has become a habit, use it positively and make sure you are getting all your hydration needs satisfied instead. Get a bottle of infused water ready on your desk or in the fridge, which will give you a chance to take a well- deserved break. Check out some infused water ideas in the recipe section.



Green juice

A freshly squeezed juice can be even a more refreshing, nutritious and energizing option, especially when experiencing a slump or sugar cravings. Aim to have at least 50-60% of the juice from vegetables for highest nutrition and more balancing effects on blood sugar. Avoid juices from cartons or pasteurized options and aim for juices that only last a couple of days, as these contain highest amounts of nutrients.

Roiboos with milk

Coffee or black tea with milk can also give a certain comfort of a milky, filling drink that many are used to from as early as childhood. Roiboos red tea with milk can give a similar comfort, just without the caffeine.

Golden milk

This Ayurvedic turmeric drink is an excellent alternative before bed, as it is calming and comforting, especially on colder, darker evenings. Turmeric is anti-inflammatory and soothes digestion, muscles and relaxes the mind. Find the recipe below.

Caffeine alternatives

Herbal teas

There is a huge selection of flavours when it comes to herbal teas and there surely is at least one for everyone. Herbal teas are excellent for cooler and wetter months of the year; however, they can also be drunk cooled down. The good news is that herbal teas count towards the daily water intake and each herb or spice has different qualities, beneficial to health. Here are a few of my favourites:

Cinnamon- this spice is excellent to balance blood sugar and curb sweet cravings

Peppermint- great to drink if experiencing stomach upsets

Camomile- calming herb that helps with stress, anxiety and insomnia

Liquorice- liquorice root supports adrenals and is excellent when chronically stressed bloating



Cranberry- supports women's health, especially if often experiencing bladder discomfort

Ginger and lemon- helps with smooth digestion and headaches

Fennel- excellent for digestive upset and bloating

Caffeine alternatives

Recipes

Lacking some ideas and inspiration for the next steps in ditching caffeine for good? These are some of my favourite recipes, tested and love by Nutrition Path community.



Infused water ideas

Looking for more exciting tastes than just pure water? Try out some different natural flavours to infuse your daily H2O with.

Some ideas:

- Lemon and Lime
- Fresh mint
- Cucumber and coriander
- Ginger
- Grapefruit and rosemary
- Raspberry and lemongrass
- Orange and mandarin
- Rose and strawberry (use dried rose petals)

Caffeine alternatives

Golden milk

Makes: 2 cups

Ingredients:

- 450ml alternative milk (tastiest with almond or rice-coconut)
- 1 tbsp coconut oil
- 1 tbsp organic turmeric
- 1 tsp cardamom
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/3 tsp vanilla
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- cracked black pepper

Method:

Simply heat the milk and add coconut oil and spices, but take off before it boils. Leave to cool slightly and sieve. Only then add honey.

Enjoy!



Caffeine alternatives

Morning chocolate tonic

This chocolate recipe contains some adaptogenic herbs, that adapt to your state of stress and energy and have either calming or energizing effects on the body. I add some matcha tea powder for extra energy in the morning.

Makes: 1 large mug

Ingredients:

1 tbps cocoa powder
¼ tspn nutmeg
½ tspn cardamom
½ tspn cinnamon
¼ tspn matcha tea powder*
¼ tspn rhodiola powder (or as directed per serving)*
¼ tspn Siberian ginseng powder (or as directed per serving)*
½ tspn reishi powder*
1 tspn ghee or coconut oil
1 cup cashew, almond or coconut alternative milk
1 tspn maple syrup or raw honey



*these are all optional, however they will contribute towards more stable energy and mood levels and concentration

Method:

1. Add all the dry ingredients and powders together in a blender, add ghee or coconut oil (for a vegan version) and blend.
2. Separately warm cashew, almond or coconut alternative milk and add to the blender. Blend until all mixes. Add maple syrup.
3. If adding honey for sweetness, make sure you cool the tonic down slightly before.

Enjoy!

Caffeine alternatives

Matcha Coconut Latte

This is my favourite matcha recipe, which is also really easy to make. Coconut milk gives it just enough sweetness.



Makes: 2 cups

Ingredients:

- 1/2 teaspoon matcha tea powder
- 100ml water
- 300ml coconut rice milk (an alternative milk)
- raw honey, to taste

Method:

1. Heat coconut rice milk in a pan, just until it boils.
2. Meanwhile make matcha tea with water as per traditional method by mixing the powder and the water with the traditional matcha brush.
3. Add hot coconut rice milk to matcha and as it cools down slightly, add raw honey to suit your taste. Make sure honey is added after the tea cools slightly, otherwise it may become toxic.

Enjoy!

Caffeine alternatives

Roiboos chai

An excellent alternative for a cool and dark evening, this drink has both the comfort of a milky drink and the sweet spice to keep you warm. Many like to sip this instead of a dessert.

Makes: 2 cups

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp. roiboos tea
- 2 ½ cups of almond milk
- 2 tbsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 tspn. nutmeg
- 1 tspn. cardamom
- 1 tspn. ground cloves
- 1 tbsp. ground ginger
- 1 tspn. ground vanilla
- 1 tspn. allspice
- 2 tbsp. maple syrup

Method

1. Add almond milk and all the dry ingredients in the pan and start heating it up on medium heat. Make sure that the milk is getting hot, but not boiling. Leave it at a moderate heat for 10min to let the spices infuse.
2. Strain the tea to individual cups and add maple syrup, 1 tbsp. to each cup.

Enjoy!



Caffeine alternatives

About Milda

Hi, my name is Milda and I am a nutritional therapist here at Nutrition Path. My passion for nutrition began when I hit emotional and physical burnout working as a sommelier in London. Always having had a keen interest in food and its relation to our bodies, I started studying Naturopathic Nutrition and for the first time I felt a sense of direction and purpose.

I have completed my training as a Nutritional Therapist in College of Naturopathic Medicine (CNM) in London. Always keen to improve my knowledge I regularly attend seminars and education events to keep up to date with the newest research. I am a full member of the British Association for Applied Nutritional Therapy

I enjoy working with people with a wide variety of health concerns and have particular interest in areas relating to digestive health, low energy and stress management, emotional eating and eating disorders. I am also seeing vegetarian and vegan clients.

Having recently relocated to the West of England, I now practice as a nutritional therapist in Bath I am also seeing clients in the Bristol area as well as remotely.



"Your body is a temple, but only if you treat it as one" ~ Astrid Alauda

I passionately believe in the healing power of nature and work with an integrative approach, looking at a person as a whole and addressing the root cause, not merely the symptoms. The body is always trying to heal itself, we only need to give it tools to do so.

Get in touch via email milda@nutritionpath.co.uk or via Nutrition Path website www.nutritionpath.co.uk

Caffeine alternatives

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