



SPECIAL Superfoods

## **Imprint**

BfR Consumer Monitor 2020 | Special Superfoods

Publisher: German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR)  
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Photo: Westend61/GettyImages

Layout/Realisation: tangram documents GmbH, Rostock

Print: Druck- und Verlagshaus Zarbock GmbH & Co. KG, Frankfurt am Main

Translation: KERN AG, Frankfurt am Main

As of: July/August 2020

Use of the results published here is possible with mention of the source "BfR Consumer Monitor 2020 | Special Superfoods".  
This text version is a translation of the original German text which is the only legally binding version.

ISBN 978-3-948484-15-6

## Foreword

Dear Readers,

An unhealthy diet is considered by many people in Germany to be one of the greatest health risks of our time. For this reason, many people are deliberately trying to eat healthily. People are increasingly reaching for so called “superfoods”. This term is often used to describe foods that are considered to be particularly beneficial to human health. The supposed health benefit is generally based on the content of nutrients – for example, a high content of vitamins, antioxidants, proteins, minerals or fibre.


Generally speaking, the term “superfood” is heavily influenced by the advertising industry and does not have a clear definition. For this reason, food cannot be clearly categorised as a superfood. There is often disagreement as to whether a food can be called a superfood or not – a fact that is also reflected in the results of the present survey.

This is why the BfR has commissioned a nationwide survey to find out what the general public understands by the term superfood, what they generally think about the subject and what health benefits and possible risks they expect from consumption. The results of the survey can be found in this special issue of the BfR Consumer Monitor.



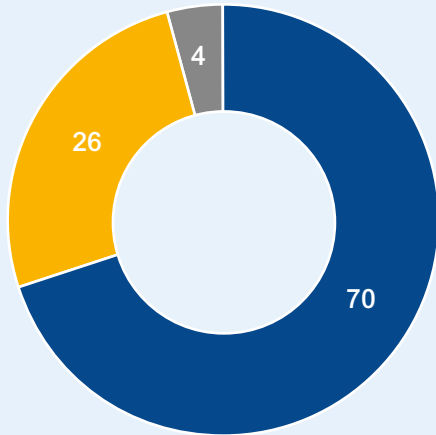
Professor Dr. Dr. Andreas Hensel

President German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR)



Have you already heard of certain foods being referred to as “superfood” or have you never heard of this?

## Awareness of the term “superfood”




Yes, I have already heard of it

No, I have never heard of it

Do not know, no answer

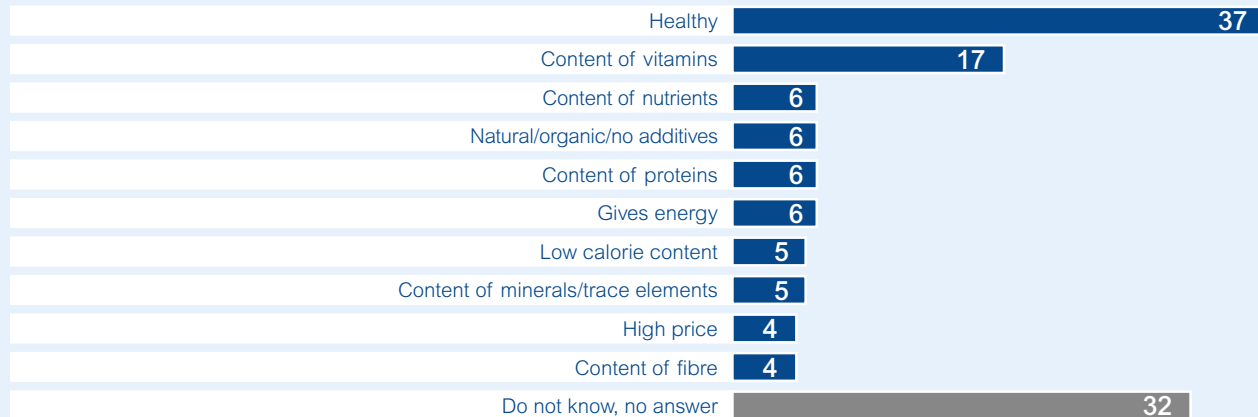
*Basis: 1,006 respondents; Figures given in percentages*



What do you think are typical properties of foods that are also referred to as superfood?

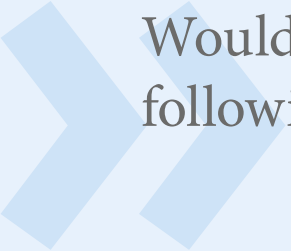
You can name up to three properties.

## Properties associated with superfoods



Shown: the ten properties most frequently mentioned spontaneously

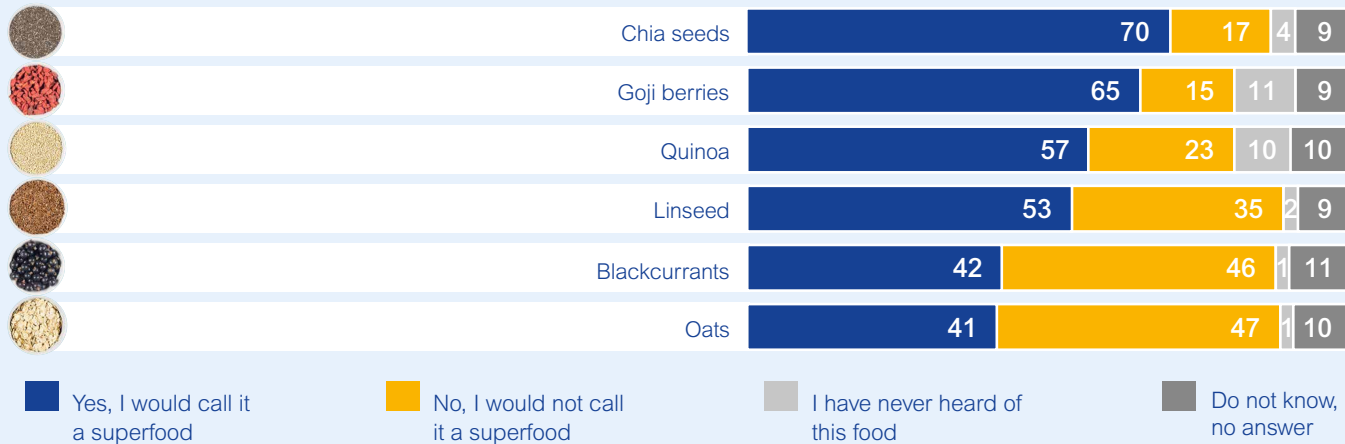
*Basis: 707 respondents who are aware of the term superfood; Figures given in percentages*



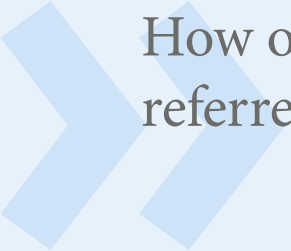
Would you or would you not call the following foods a “superfood”?



## Labelling of foods as a superfood



*Basis: 707 respondents who are aware of the term superfood; Figures given in percentages*



## How often have you recently eaten food also referred to as superfood?


The term “superfood” is often used to describe foods that are considered to be particularly beneficial to human health because they are said to contain high contents of nutrients – for example, a high content of vitamins, antioxidants, proteins, minerals or fibre. Exotic foods in particular are referred to as superfoods.

Typical examples of superfood are: chia seeds, quinoa, goji berries, matcha tea, avocado.

## Frequency of superfood consumption



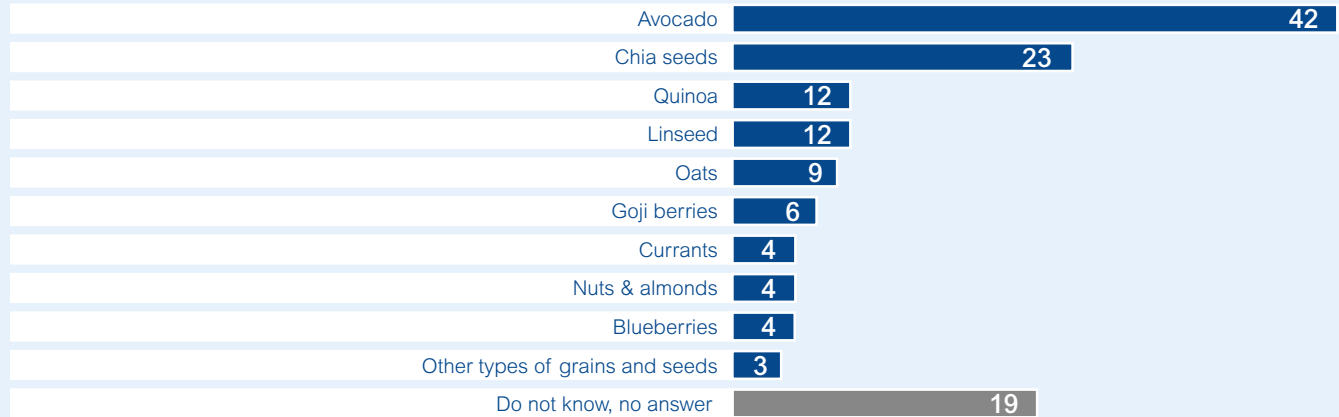
Basis: 1,006 respondents; Figures given in percentages



What specific foods, also referred to as superfood, have you eaten recently?


You can name up to three superfoods.

## Consumed superfood products



Shown: the ten foods most frequently mentioned spontaneously

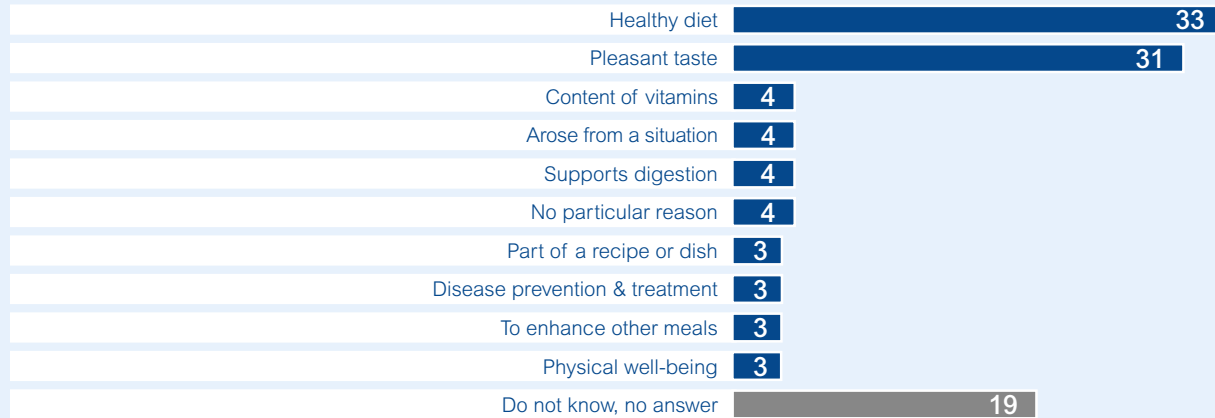
*Basis: 590 respondents who have recently eaten food also referred to as superfood; Figures given in percentages*



For what reasons have you recently eaten food also referred to as superfood?


You can name up to three reasons.

## Reasons for consumption



Shown: the ten reasons most frequently mentioned spontaneously

*Basis: 590 respondents who have recently eaten food also referred to as superfood; Figures given in percentages*

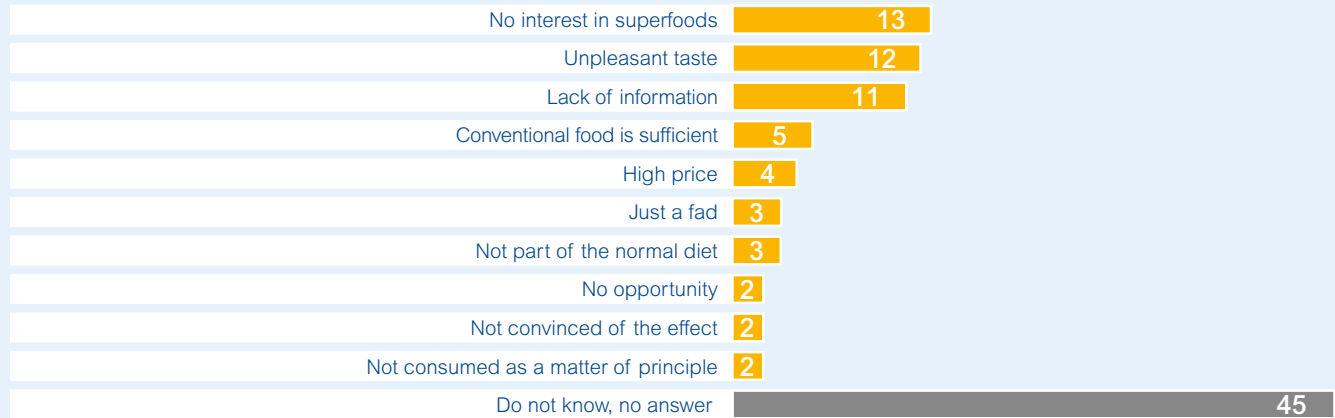


For what reasons have you recently not eaten food also referred to as superfood?

You can name up to three reasons.




## Reasons against consumption



Shown: the ten reasons most frequently mentioned spontaneously

*Basis: 395 respondents who have not recently eaten food also referred to as superfood; Figures given in percentages*




How do you rate the health risks and health benefits of foods that are also referred to as superfood?

## Rating of health benefits and risks



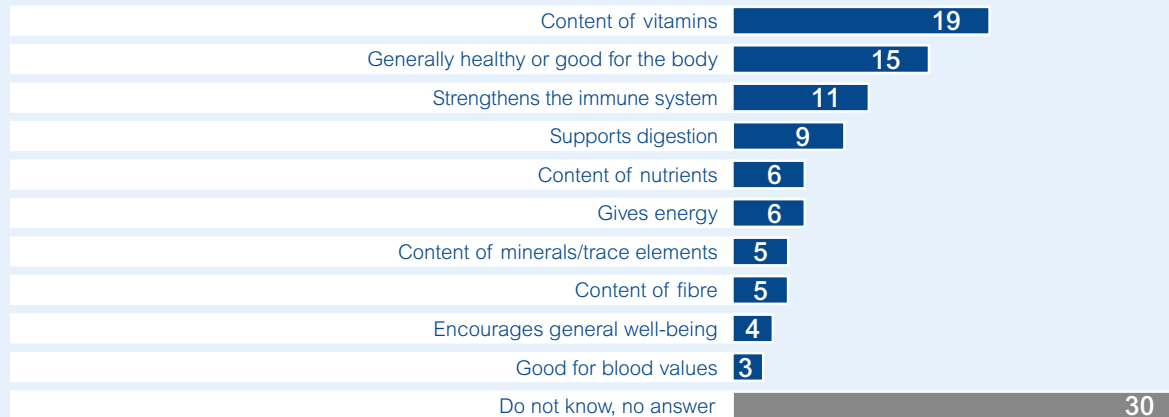
Basis: 1,006 respondents; Figures given in percentages



## Which health benefits do you see in foods also referred to as superfood?


You can name up to three benefits.

## Possible health benefits



Shown: the ten benefits most frequently mentioned spontaneously

*Basis: 493 respondents who rate the health benefits of superfoods as high or very high; Figures given in percentages*




## Which health risks do you see in foods also referred to as superfood?

You can name up to three risks.

## Possible health risks



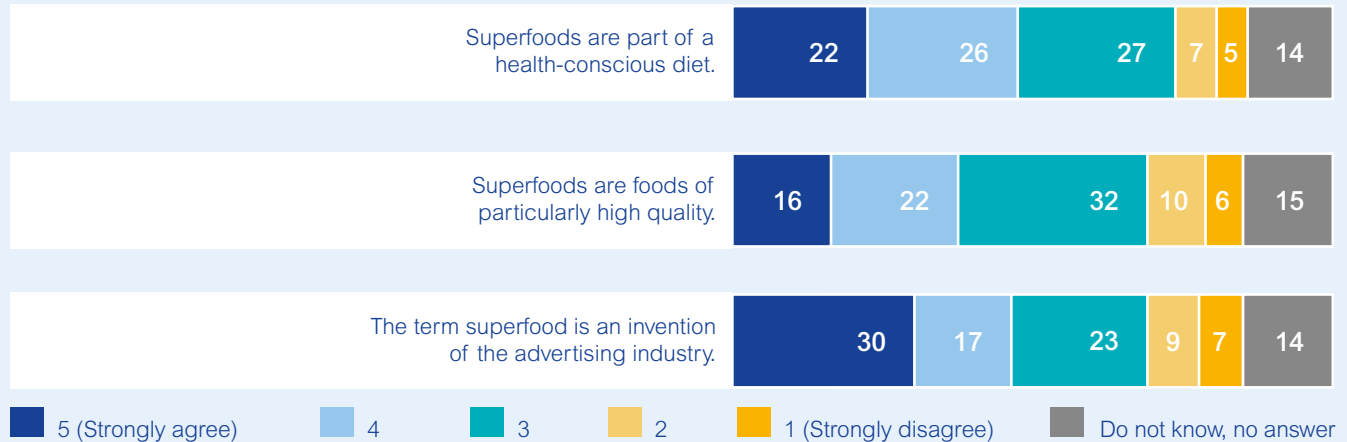
*Basis: 83 respondents who rate the health risks of superfoods as high or very high; Figures given in percentages*




To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on superfoods?



## Assessment of statements on superfoods



Basis: 1,006 respondents; Figures given in percentages



In your opinion, are the following statements about superfoods true or false?

## Knowledge of superfood



*Basis: 1,006 respondents; Figures given in percentages*

## How were the data collected?

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Date of the survey:</b>      | 31 July to 8 August 2020  |
| <b>Number of respondents:</b>   | 1,006   |
| <b>Presentation of results:</b> | All figures in percent, rounding differences possible   |
| <b>Population:</b>              | Kantar Online Access Panel participants in Germany aged 14 years and over   |
| <b>Sampling:</b>                | Random sample of panel participants with representative quota control according to gender, age, education and region                  |
| <b>Data weighting:</b>          | Data was weighted according to gender, education, age, employment, size of city and German federal state to ensure representativeness |
| <b>Method:</b>                  | Online survey   |
| <b>Conducted by:</b>            | Kantar  |

## Superfoods

Superfood does not currently have any legal definition. The term is predominantly coined by the advertising industry and frequently describes foods that are considered to be particularly beneficial to human health based on their ingredients. A high content of vitamins, antioxidants, proteins, minerals or fibre as well as the origin from other cultural areas are, therefore, common characteristics of these foods. Typical examples are chia seeds, avocado and goji berries.

Even though health benefits take centre stage, in some cases superfoods can also pose health risks. These include certain ingredients and contaminants that can be harmful to health if consumed excessively. Intolerances or allergic reactions can also be triggered by consumption under certain circumstances.

Specific superfood products are often insufficiently researched to allow for a conclusive health risk assessment. However, foods that are new to the European market are subject to the “Novel Food Regulation” and go through strict testing and approval procedures. For example, in 2009 the addition of chia seeds to bread products was permitted up to a maximum content of 5 percent.

A balanced and varied diet generally remains the best basis for staying healthy. This can be supported by the consumption of imported superfoods just as by the consumption of local fruits and vegetables. For example, blackcurrants offer an alternative to goji berries due to their high content of vitamin C, just as linseed, with its high content of proteins and omega-3 fatty acids, shares similarities with the nutritional profile of chia seeds.

## About the BfR

Do nanoparticles promote the occurrence of allergies? Does apple juice contain too much aluminium? The German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment, or BfR for short, is responsible for answering questions on all aspects of the health assessment of foods and feeds, consumer products and chemicals. Through its work, it makes a decisive contribution towards ensuring that food, products and the use of chemicals have become safer in Germany. The Institute's main tasks comprise the assessment of existing health risks and identification of new ones, the development of recommendations to limit risks and the transparent communication of this process. This work results in the scientific advice given to political decision makers. To help with the strategic alignment of its risk communication, the BfR conducts its own research in the field of risk perception. The Institute is independent in its scientific assessments, research and communication. The BfR belongs to the portfolio of the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL).

**i** More information at: [www.bfr.bund.de/en](http://www.bfr.bund.de/en)

*Superfoods:*

**> A-Z-Index > S > superfoods**

*Novel foods:*

**> Food safety > Special food groups > Novel Food**

**> A-Z-Index > N > novel foods**

**i** More information at: [www.verbraucherzentrale.de](http://www.verbraucherzentrale.de)  
(only in German)

*Superfoods:*

**> Lebensmittel > Nahrungsergänzungsmittel >  
Search for "Superfood"**



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