









STARCHY FOODS

By Julie Cottrell, MS, RD, LD

This PDF highlights foods that are fairly high in [starch](#); use this info to choose the healthiest options.

- Starchy foods are higher in [calories](#) and [carbs](#) than foods like non-starchy veggies (see [this PDF](#) for examples). Starchy foods also have a [greater effect on blood sugar](#). People following lower-carb diets need to be more selective about which ones to include and how much.
- Some people on lower-carb plans like to “save carbs” for one meal per day; it may be easier to work some of these options into a dinner meal, especially if these are foods your family enjoys.
- The [healthiest](#) options will have more [fiber](#) and [nutrients](#) and will be [single-ingredient](#) and/or [minimally processed](#). The pictures you see first (below) will be single-ingredient foods, followed by foods that contain multiple ingredients. A goal for a healthy diet is to eat the least amount of ultra-processed foods possible, and mostly stick with minimally processed, whole foods.
- This category of foods includes some ingredients like [wheat](#) and [gluten](#) that some people need to avoid. Other [antinutrients](#) (like [lectins](#), [oxalates](#) and [phytates](#)) are in some of these as well as [FODMAPs](#). These can all be sources of [inflammation](#) in your body and can be harmful in other ways as well. You may need to experiment to learn more about your individual tolerance. It’s also important to prepare foods (cook, sprout, ferment) in ways that reduce the potential toxic effects.
- This PDF will highlight a variety of starchy foods, and will include some quick tips plus a link to learn more ([blue hyperlink](#)), followed by a table that lists calories, carbs, fiber and net carbs.

Acorn Squash	Butternut Squash	Corn	Parsnips	Peas
				
A winter squash that is packed with nutrients and fiber. Cut in half or into thin slices and roast in the oven with olive oil and salt to bring out the sweetness.	Rich in many nutrients; low in calories; high in fiber; can be used in many ways; read here for info on how to use it. Caution: This is a high FODMAP food.	Corn is a cereal grain with many nutrients– but also has serious downsides to consider, including phytates and being a GMO crop. Buy organic and pop your own popcorn in coconut oil or butter.	A root vegetable with a sweet, slightly nutty flavor. Loaded with nutrients and high in fiber. Many ways to prepare them; use this link for inspiration.	Use in casseroles, or simply heat and serve as a side dish; try sugar snap or snow peas for less total carbs.
White Potato	Sweet Potato	Beans/Legumes	Black Beans/Pintos	Black-Eyed Peas
				
Naturally gluten-free; packed with nutrients; incredibly filling; a source of beneficial resistant starch but also contains lectins . Roast w/olive oil and herbs. Avoid French fries and potato chips.	Similar nutrients to white potato, but has more vitamin A (comparison here). Medium to high glycemic index so keep portions small (<1 cup). Caution: a source of oxalates .	Naturally gluten-free; a non-animal source of protein; lots of fiber helps slow absorption and effect on blood sugar; inexpensive. Note: all beans are high in FODMAPs + some antinutrients .	High in fiber, protein and nutrients; however, there are many antinutrients too. Be sure to properly soak and cook long enough– or buy canned (rinse for less sodium).	Also known as “cowpeas”, they have a strong flavor. Nutrient-dense; lots of fiber; soak for 6 hours before cooking; they contain raffinose , a type of fiber that may be hard to digest.

Chickpeas	Edamame	Hummus	Lentils	Lima Beans
				
Also known as garbanzo beans. A versatile ingredient; can be added to soup or salads; may also be roasted and eaten as a snack or mashed to become hummus.	Traditionally eaten in Asia, edamame is a young soybean. Remove the shell before eating or buy shelled ones. High in protein (a complete source). Get organic to avoid GMOs.	A combo of chickpeas, tahini, olive oil, lemon juice and garlic; eaten as a dip or spread. Read labels on processed versions to check which oil; great snack with veggies. Publix brand is good.	A legume; very high in protein, fiber, and antioxidants; budget-friendly. Like all legumes, has antinutrients . Read here how to reduce antinutrients. Pic is Lentil-Lime Salad .	Like all beans, the glycemic index is low; including a small amount with meals may stabilize blood sugar. Also called butter beans; they have a creamy texture + mild flavor.
Grits	Oatmeal	Rice	Quinoa	Couscous
				
Made from corn; stone-ground and hominy grits are the healthiest; regular and instant versions have less nutrients & fiber. Calories vary based on what you add to them. Savory options best for blood sugar. All options high in starch/carbs.	Steel-cut and rolled oats preferred; avoid sugar-sweetened instant oats. Read more here . Pair with lower-carb Greek yogurt for more protein; use stevia or allulose to sweeten. Recipe to try: Protein Overnight Oats	Basmati and wild rice are the best options. Compare rice options here . For all options, use in small portions; and substitute riced cauliflower where you can! Cooked and cooled rice is a source of prebiotic fiber and has lower GI.	Gluten-free and packed with nutrients, including fiber. It's reasonably high in protein too. Also high in carbs + has some antinutrients. Goes with sweet and savory dishes, but use in moderation.	A processed grain item made from wheat or semolina. Rich in the antioxidant selenium and a good source of plant-based protein. Easy to prepare. Cons: high in carbs and gluten; not many nutrients besides selenium.
Pasta	Rye Bread	Sprouted Grain Bread	Sourdough Bread	Tortillas
				
Usually made from wheat but may be made from other grains or legumes. Whole-grain versions have more fiber. Glycemic index is low to moderate. It's a high-carb food; one cup has 37-43 grams. Compare to spaghetti squash @ 10 grams carbs/cup. Use as a side dish along with protein and veggies.	Rye-based breads (including Pumpernickel) prepared in traditional ways are similar to sourdough: less antinutrients, more bioavailable nutrients, etc. Zingerman's makes a variety of sprouted rye breads; order online. Dave's Killer Rye bread is organic but not sprouted.	Sprouted grain bread has advantages over regular bread. Read more here . Dave's Killer and Ezekiel are 2 options. Sprouting reduces antinutrients . To lose weight, minimize all bread; try lettuce or cabbage in place of bread (for wraps) to decrease calories and carbs.	True sourdough bread is made with a wild yeast starter; it's higher in bioavailable nutrients than regular bread; better effect on blood sugar; easier to digest. Not all store-bought sourdough bread uses the traditional method. Rustik brand does; it's available at Walmart .	Extreme Wellness wraps are reduced in carbs and high in fiber; but do contain wheat. Corn tortillas also contain fiber and may be gluten-free (check ingredients) but are high in starch. Both options will raise blood sugar more than a lettuce wrap. See CARB SWAPS for examples of tortilla options.

Food	Amount	Calories	Carbs (grams)	Fiber (grams)	Net Carbs (grams)
Beans/Legumes - black beans	1/2 cup, canned, drained	120	22.4	9.0	13.4
Beans/Legumes - black-eyed peas	1/2 cup, canned, drained	90	16.0	4.0	12.0
Beans/Legumes - chickpeas	1/2 cup, canned, drained	135	22.5	6.2	16.3
Beans/Legumes - edamame	1/2 cup cooked	112	6.9	4	2.9
Beans/Legumes - lentils	1/2 cup, boiled, drained	115	19.9	5.8	14.1
Beans/Legumes - lima beans	1/2 cup, canned, drained	108	19.6	6.6	13.0
Beans/Legumes - pintos	1/2 cup, canned, drained	97	17.3	4.7	12.6
Beets	1/2 cup boiled, diced	35	7.8	1.6	6.2
Bread - Dave's Killer Thin Sliced	1 slice Powerseed bread	60	12.0	3.0	9.0
Bread - Ezekiel 4:9	1 slice	80	15	3	12
Bread - Rye - Dave's Killer Rye	1 slice	110	22	3	19
Bread - Sourdough - Rustik Oven	1 slice	180	32	2	30
Corn on the Cob	1 medium, about 7 inches	99	21.6	2.5	19.1
Couscous	1/2 cup cooked	89	18.2	1.2	17.1
Grits - regular cooking	1/2 cup cooked	89	19.0	1.1	17.9
Hummus	2 tablespoons	71	5	2	3
Oatmeal - rolled oats	1/2 cup cooked (1/4 cup dry)	77	13.7	2.0	11.7
Parsnips	1 cup cooked	100	24	6.5	17.5
Pasta or Spaghetti - whole wheat	1 cup cooked	208	42.1	5.5	36.6
Peas - cooked from frozen	1/2 cup	62	11.4	3.6	7.8
Potato - white, baked (122 grams)	1 cup, cooked, chopped	113	25.8	2.7	23.1
Potato - sweet, baked (122 grams)	1 cup, cooked, chopped	110	25.3	4.0	21.2
Quinoa	1/2 cup, cooked	113	19.7	2.1	17.6
Rice - brown	1/2 cup, cooked	124	25.8	1.6	24.2
Rice - white	1/2 cup, cooked	103	22.3	0.3	22.0
Rice - wild	1/2 cup, cooked	83	17.5	1.5	16.0
Squash - acorn	1 cup cooked	115	30	9	21
Squash - butternut	1 cup cooked	82	22	7	15
Tortilla (Extreme Wellness Low Carb)	1 tortilla	70	16.0	6.0	10.0