Paratha or Pizza
Paneer or Tofu
Curd or Greek Yogurt
Brownie or Cookie
Noodles or Pasta
Rasgulla or Ice Cream
White Bread or Chapati
Jaggery or Sugar
Makhana or Popcorn
Curd Rice or Khichdi
Milk Tea Or Black Tea
Cornflakes Or Idli

WHICH ONE IS HEALTHIER?



Designed by Sajeev Kumarapuram/TOI

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WHICH ONE IS HEALTHIER?

A quick food comparison guide that breaks down the nutritional value of over 100 everyday items to help you make smarter, balanced choices

TOI HEALTH+

with

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WHAT'S INSIDE?



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Paneer vs Tofu
White Bread vs Chapati
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Shahi Tukra vs Tiramisu
Caramel Custard vs Rice Kheer
Sorbet vs Gelato
Atta Instant Noodles vs Korean Ramen

WHICH ONE IS HEALTHIER?



OR



Makhana 100g		Popcorn 100g
347	CALORIES	**375**
9.7g	PROTEIN	**11g**
0.1g	FATS	**4.3g**
76.9g	CARBS	**74g**
14.5g	FIBRE	**13g**
60mg	CALCIUM	**0mg**
1.4mg	IRON	**0mg**

This chart compares the nutritional value of two of our favourite Indian snacks — makhana and popcorn. The calories for both are almost the same. But makhanas are a healthier option as they are a good source of fibre, and also high on micronutrients like calcium and iron. Popcorn, on the other hand, is mostly loaded with butter and salt, sometimes sugar coated too, which adds extra calories. But remember to have plain dry roasted makhana, not fried and salted.



OR



French fries one serving 28g		**Sweet potato fries** one serving 50g
151	CALORIES	**126**
1g	PROTEIN	**1g**
10g	FATS	**10g**
16g	CARBS	**8g**
168g	SODIUM	**0.5g**
0.1g	FIBRE	**1.5g**

French fries and its sweet potato variant have same calories and protein per serving. Sweet potatoes are an excellent snacking option as they are nutritious, rich in fibre (especially soluble fibre), filling and delicious, making it good for diabetics and those with heart conditions. But deep frying adds on the extra fat and calories. On the other hand, French fries are just carbs loaded with salt and, when fried, adds extra calories. So, it's wise to have it in moderation, as a chaat or as a healthier, pre-boiled option.

WHICH ONE IS HEALTHIER?



OR



Jaggery 100g		**Sugar** 100g
353	CALORIES	**383**
1.8g	PROTEIN	**0.01g**
0.1g	FAT	**0.01g**
0.6g	FIBRE	**Nil**
4.6mg	IRON	**Nil**
107mg	CALCIUM	**Nil**

Is jaggery better or sugar? Both are made from the same crop — sugarcane. Both are almost similar in calories. But, while sugar is made through industrial processes, jaggery is prepared by natural means which ensures that it retains traces of iron, other minerals as well as antioxidants. It's a natural sweetener that's considered good for immunity, aids digestion and eases respiratory problems. But remember to consume in moderation as it's a concentrated source of calories.

WHICH ONE IS HEALTHIER?



OR



Paneer one serving of 100g		**Tofu** one serving of 100g
309	CALORIES	**130-150**
19g	PROTEIN	**17g**
25g	FATS	**9g**
Nil	FIBRE	**2g**

Paneer and tofu (soya paneer) have a similar protein profile, but tofu has half the calories paneer has. It's also low on fat, heart-friendly and good for diabetics. Tofu is also high on plant-based estrogens, making it ideal for menopausal women.

WHICH ONE IS HEALTHIER?





White bread 2 slices (50g)		Chapati 2 pieces (60g)
125	CALORIES	**160**
4.2g	PROTEIN	**4g**
25g	CARBS	**30g**
1g	FIBRE	**5g**
280mg	SODIUM	**80mg**

Chapatis made from whole wheat flour are a healthier option than bread, with more fibre, natural vitamins and minerals. Its low glycemic index makes chapatis good for diabetics. Bread is a convenient food item that can be bought off the shelves but is high on additives and preservatives, and usually low on fibre.



OR



Curd

one serving of 100g

Greek yogurt

one serving of 100g

60	CALORIES	**90**
3.2g	PROTEIN	**7g**
1.5g	FATS	**2.2g**
176mg	CALCIUM	**150mg**

Did you think curd and yogurt are the same? Here's a chart that says exactly how different they are. Curd is made by fermenting milk with lactic acid bacteria. And yogurt is made by fermenting milk using live strains of two kinds of bacteria — Lactobacillus bulgaricus and Streptococcus thermophilus, which makes it a better probiotic. And Greek yogurt is a denser version of regular yogurt that's better for those who are lactose intolerant. Both are almost similar in calories and calcium, but Greek yogurt has more than double the protein that curd has. The downside is that Greek yogurt is more expensive and often has added sugar. So, check the label before you buy one for maximum benefit.

WHICH ONE IS HEALTHIER?

Rasgulla (per piece)		Ice cream Vanilla (66g)
120	CALORIES	**130-150**
2g	PROTEIN	**1g**
1.5g	FATS	**7-8g**
20g	CARBS	**17-20g**
20g	SUGAR	**14-16g**
100mg	CALCIUM	**80mg**

OR



This chart compares the nutritional value of two popular sweet treats — vanilla ice cream and rasgulla. One serving of plain vanilla ice cream can be more calorie dense than rasgulla, especially if garnished with more ingredients. It's high on fat and sugar, with additives and preservatives. But rasgulla, our traditional Indian dessert, is made of Indian cottage cheese or chhena, which provides some protein and calcium as well. Besides, the sweet is not fried but boiled in thin sugar syrup, so it's got less calories and fat. And we always squeeze out the syrup before popping it into our mouth, which saves some more calories.



WHICH ONE IS HEALTHIER?



Brownie 1 slice (30-35g)		**Cookie** 1-2 (20-30g)
150-200	CALORIES	**120-150**
1-2g	PROTEIN	**1-2g**
8-10g	FAT	**5-8g**
20-25g	CARBS	**15-20g**
15-20g	SUGAR	**10-15g**

Brownies and cookies are both indulgent desserts enjoyed during festive times but are dense on calories and fat, and rich on sugars. Refined flour (maida) is a key ingredient in both, which raises the glycemic index and causes a quick sugar spike in the blood. It's important to do portion control by having a small piece of brownie or just one cookie to check the calorie intake. Cookies made with whole grains, sooji and nuts can be a healthy alternative. As for brownies, one can use oats or whole grain flour with less sugar and butter, adding dark chocolate, nuts and seeds for a healthier recipe.



OR



Paratha (one serving)		**Pizza** (one serving)
250	CALORIES	**380**
4-6g	PROTEIN	**4g**
10g	FATS	**20g**
5-10mg	SODIUM	**500-900mg**

Paratha is a favourite breakfast dish often with a vegetable or paneer stuffing. Calories vary depending on size and amount of oil/ghee added. A pizza might have similar calories, but those are unhealthy calories. The base is mostly made of refined flour (maida) which leads to insulin resistance and weight gain. It's loaded with cheese, which adds to fat content besides being high on sodium, preservatives and colouring agents. However, one can opt for a whole grain crust and add vegetables.



Almond milk

Oat milk

64	CALORIES	130
2g	PROTEIN	2g
4g	FATS	3g
4g	CARBS	14g
Nil	FIBRE	2g

Almond milk and oat milk — both dairy free — are a boon for vegans and folks who are lactose intolerant. Almond milk is not for those with nut allergies though. It has a subtle nutty taste and a thinner, more watery consistency compared to oat milk, which has a naturally creamy texture. They aren't far apart in their nutritional quotient, but oat milk is higher in fibre and almond milk has less than half the calories. The protein and calcium contents in both plant-based milks are lower than cow milk (unless they are fortified), and the prices are 3-4 times higher. Choose the unsweetened version as most have large amounts of added sugar.



Everyday food with hidden salt

According to the World Health Organisation, the daily limit of sodium is 2,000mg. Yet, many everyday foods that are not obviously salty contain high amounts of hidden salt

Food item	Amount	Sodium level	Percentage of daily limit
Canned food	One can of luncheon meat	**1,393mg**	**69.7**
Instant noodles	One serving	**861mg**	**43.0**
Bread	One slice	**100-172mg**	**5-8.6**
Ketchup	One tablespoon	**170mg**	**8.5**
Regular soft drinks	One can	**30-50mg**	**1.5-2.5**

Source: WHO

WHICH ONE IS HEALTHIER?



Cashews (28g)		Peanuts (28g)
188	CALORIES	**189**
5g	PROTEIN	**9g**
15g	FATS	**14g**
11g	CARBS	**5.3g**
1g	FIBRE	**3g**
210mg	SODIUM	**4mg**

OR

Snack time is often incomplete without cashews and peanuts. Kids hide them in their pockets to munch on later. Adults keep snitching fistfuls from the kitchen cabinet. They are similar in calories per serving, but peanuts are a better option as they are high on fibre, are locally available, and go well with the Indian palate. Cashews are usually available as salted versions that cranks up the sodium content. Also, the protein content of peanuts is much higher than cashews. But ditch the salted, packaged ones and instead, choose peanuts with the shell as those are the ones high on fibre and low on salt.

WHICH ONE IS HEALTHIER?



Orange juice One glass		Fresh orange One fruit
110	CALORIES	**62**
20g	SUGAR	**9g**
0	FAT	**0**
25.5g	CARBS	**15g**
0.5g	FIBER	**3g**
2g	PROTEIN	**1g**
4% of RDI*	VITAMIN A	**6% of RDI**
137% of RDI	VITAMIN C	**116% of RDI**

OR

The chart above compares the nutritional value of one glass (240ml) of orange juice compared to a medium orange (130g) — both count as one serving of fruit. While orange juice might be easier to swig, it has way less fibre and twice the calories. And this is even when the pack says no sugar added. If you feel juice is okay for kids since they are more active, think again. Teams from Toronto and Boston reviewed 42 studies into the effect of drinking 100% fruit juice — pure fruit juice with no additives — daily. They found that in children, there is a positive association between daily drinking of fruit juice and weight gain. One big reason for that is while you will probably eat just one orange, you need around three oranges to make a glass of juice — so that's way more sugar and minus the good fibre

*RDI: Reference Daily Intake; Source: Healthline



OR



Cornflakes

(30g)

Idlis

(2 pieces)

100	CALORIES	**110**
2g	PROTEIN	**4g**
24g	CARBS	**24g**
0.1g	FATS	**0.4g**
240mg	SODIUM	**50-60mg**
1g	FIBRE	**1g**

Cornflakes are the go-to breakfast when you are in a hurry. Steaming hot idlis are to be savoured during the weekends when you have more time at hand. Both these breakfast items are similar in calories but their nutritional profile is very different. Cornflakes are refined carbs with high sodium and a very high glycemic index that leads to a rise in blood sugar levels. But Idlis are much healthier, high on protein and fibre, and can be made more nutritious by adding oats, millets, rava, and any other grain of choice. Don't go for fried idlis though, the deep frying kills all the goodness.



OR



Nutella (One tablespoon)		Peanut butter (One tablespoon)
100	CALORIES	**95**
1g	PROTEIN	**4g**
6g	FATS	**7.5g**
11g	CARBS	**3g**
10g	SUGAR	**1g**
8mg	SODIUM	**51mg**

Both Nutella and peanut butter are common bread spreads popular with kids and youngsters alike, but with very different nutritional profiles. Nutella is high on carbs, of which 99% is simple sugar, and unhealthy fat. Peanut butter is low on sugar, an excellent source of protein and healthy fat. But a word of caution, choose unsweetened peanut butter for all the benefits.



OR



Black tea	(One cup)	Milk tea
1	CALORIES	60
Nil	PROTEIN	2.5g
Nil	FATS	2g
Nil	CARBS	6g
Nil	SUGAR	5-10g

Both are much loved as beverages, with a steady fan following for each. But black tea is almost zero-calorie and is very simple to make. It's rich in antioxidants called polyphenols, making it heart-friendly and good for the gut. But adding milk and sugar to black tea (to make milk tea) adds on the extra calories. It can also result in digestive issues for those with lactose intolerance. So, if you want to skip the calories and get the antioxidants, go for black tea. Milk tea has a richer, creamier taste though. But a word of caution — tea contains tannin, and excess tannin reduces the body's ability to absorb iron.



OR



Brown rice One serving (100g cooked)		White rice One serving (100g cooked)
125	CALORIES	**124**
3.2g	PROTEIN	**2.7g**
0.4g	FATS	**0.2g**
26g	CARBS	**27g**
1.5g	FIBRE	**0.8g**

Brown rice and white rice are almost similar in calories, proteins and fats but the difference lies in the nutrient quality. Brown rice is a whole grain with the bran, which contains fibre, vitamins like B complex and minerals like magnesium and manganese. High fibre aids in weight management and heart health. Its low glycemic index also makes it ideal for diabetics. White rice, on the other hand, cooks faster and is easy to digest. It's low on fibre, which means it's ideal for those with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).



OR



Ice cream

(One serving)

Frozen yogurt

(One serving)

230	CALORIES	**150**
3.5g	PROTEIN	**3g**
13g	FATS	**3.5g**
25g	CARBS	**26g**
23g	SUGAR	**20g**

Ice cream has a lot of saturated fat owing to the milk and cream used, and makes for a richer dessert. But frozen yogurt is far lesser in calories and fat content, making it a healthier option. Their protein and carb contents are almost the same. But both are loaded with sugar and should be consumed in moderation.



OR



Nimbu pani

One glass (from Tetra Pak)

Buttermilk

One glass (from Tetra Pak)

44	CALORIES	**57**
Nil	PROTEIN	**3g**
Nil	FATS	**3g**
11g	CARBS	**3.6g**
10g	SUGAR	**Nil**
35mg	VITAMIN C	**Nil**
400mg	SODIUM	**500mg**

Both these summer coolers are everyone's favourite. Nimbu pani is an excellent source of vitamin C and helps detoxify the system. And adding less sugar reduces its calories. On the other hand, fermented dairy drink buttermilk contains probiotics that promote gut health. It's a good source of protein and calcium, and is good for those with lactose intolerance. A line of caution though: go for fresh buttermilk instead of a packaged one as that's loaded with salt and not suitable for people with hypertension.



OR



Dalia One serving (40g)		Oats One serving (40g)
136	CALORIES	**163**
4.3g	PROTEIN	**4.7g**
1g	FATS	**3.8g**
27.6g	CARBS	**27.4g**
3g	FIBRE	**4g**
Negligible	SOLUBLE FIBRE	**1.5g**

Both oats and dalia are excellent choices for a healthy diet and have almost similar nutritional profiles. Both are a good source of complex carbs, with low glycemic index that makes them good for weight management and better sugar control. Their high fibre content makes them easy to digest, promoting gut health. Additionally, oats has soluble fibre B-glucan which protects the heart and helps lower bad cholesterol.



OR



Mayonnaise One serving (15g)		**Cheese spread** One serving (15g)
100	CALORIES	**40**
1g	PROTEIN	**2g**
10g	FAT	**3g**
1.5g	CARBS	**0.5g**
92mg	SODIUM	**135mg**

Both mayonnaise and cheese spread are hot favourites, especially among children. But mayonnaise is high on calories, fat, salt, preservatives and additives, with no nutritional benefit. Cheese spread may have a slightly better nutritional profile as it contains some protein and is low in calories per serving. But one needs to be careful as it's also high on salt, flavourings and emulsifiers. One can go for healthier spread options like Greek yogurt, hummus or guacamole that are lower in calories, have beneficial nutrients and zero additives or preservatives when made at home.

Which oil is best for your heart health?

Confused about which oils are healthy and which aren't? The best ones are lower in saturated fats. But the answer is not simple since smoking points of oils differ, so one can be good for deep frying while another is suitable for salad dressings.
Let's decode the choices...



SATURATED FATTY ACIDS (SFAs)

Single bonds ● Stay solid at room temperature

Examples | Coconut oil, palm oil, palm kernel oil, beef tallow and lard



Health impact | Excessive consumption linked to increased LDL (bad) cholesterol levels, which can contribute to heart disease



UNSATURATED FATTY ACIDS

One or more double bonds ● Liquid at room temperature

Examples | Monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFAs) like olive oil, avocado oil, canola oil, and peanut oil. Another type is polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs). Omega-3 rich PUFAs are fish oil, flaxseed oil, chia seed oil, walnut oil, while Omega-6 rich PUFAs are sunflower oil, corn oil, soybean oil, and rice bran oil



Health impact
Unsaturated fats — both monounsaturated and polyunsaturated — are considered healthier than saturated fats. They have been linked to lower LDL (bad) cholesterol levels and can help protect against heart disease



	SFA (%)	MUFA (%)	PUFA (%)		Smoke point (°C)
			N3	N6	
SUITABLE FOR DEEP FRYING					
Rice bran oil	22.5	44	0.5	33	260
Mustard oil	12	60	6.0	15	250
Groundnut oil	10.7	71	0	18	232
Ghee	62	28	0.5	3.0	230
Sesame oil	16.9	42	0.2	40.9	210
SHALLOW FRYING & SAUTÉING					
Safflower oil	9.3	11.6	0.2	79	250
Soybean oil	16	23	7.0	51	230
Sunflower oil	9.4	28.3	0.2	62	226
Coconut oil	92	6.0	0	1.6	176
SALAD DRESSING					
Olive oil (extra virgin)	19.4	68	1.6	16.4	210

Refined olive oil can be used for sauteing

WHAT NUTRITIONISTS SAY

- A combination of oils with different n6:n3 (Omega 3 and 6) ratios is recommended for a balanced intake of fatty acids
- The National Institute of Nutrition suggests blending oils like mustard and rice bran oil or rice bran and soybean oil for daily low-temperature cooking. For frying, use refined oils that have higher smoke points. Heating oil after it has started smoking leads to nutrient loss and harmful free radicals
- It is advised to use 500-750ml of oil per person per month

Source: Madras Diabetes Research Foundation, Chennai



OR



Tomato ketchup

One serving (17g)

Mint chutney

One serving (15g)

20	CALORIES	**6**
Negligible	PROTEIN	**Negligible**
5g	CARBS	**1g**
4g	SUGAR	**0.5g**
Negligible	FIBRE	**0.5g**
180mg	SODIUM	**40mg**

Homemade mint chutney has fresh herbs like mint and cilantro, spices, jaggery and lemon juice, making for a very healthy dip loaded with fibre and micronutrients like iron and vitamin C. On the other hand, commercially produced tomato ketchup is high on sugar, salt and preservatives, which makes portion control important. Opting for homemade tomato ketchup instead can have great health benefits owing to its high lycopene content, which is an antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and anti-carcinogenic.



OR



Kaju katli 1 piece		Rice kheer One serving (100gm)
70	CALORIES	**140**
1g	PROTEIN	**4g**
4g	FAT	**5g**
8g	CARBS	**20g**
6g	SUGAR	**10g**

Both are traditional Indian desserts but have a very different nutrition profile. Kaju katli is made with cashews and is very high on calories, fats and sugar content. Rice kheer is a better option as it's made with milk, which adds to the protein and calcium content. But one must add less sugar and use low-fat milk to reduce the calories. Kaju katli can be an occasional treat, while one needs to do portion control when it comes to rice kheer.



OR



Hot chocolate

One serving

Cappuccino

One serving

240	CALORIES	**90**
7g	PROTEIN	**2g**
10g	FAT	**3g**
30g	CARBS	**15g**
20g	SUGAR	**10g**

Both are comfort drinks during the chilly winter. Hot chocolate is high on antioxidants thanks to the cocoa, but it is also very high on calories and sugar. Cappuccino, on the other hand, is high on caffeine which can boost alertness, and much lower in calories and sugar. An unsweetened version lowers the calories further. So, choose a hot chocolate when craving for something sweet, comforting or indulgent, but go for a cappuccino when looking for a low-calorie energising drink.



OR



Muesli One serving		Oats One serving
179	CALORIES	**163**
3.8g	PROTEIN	**4.7g**
5.6g	FAT	**3.8g**
29g	CARBS	**27.4g**
4.3g	SUGAR	**Nil**
2.5g	FIBRE	**4g**
97mg	SODIUM	**3.8mg**

Both are healthy breakfast options but differ in nutritional profiles. Oats are high on soluble fibre (beta-glucan), which help reduce blood cholesterol and aid diabetes management. Muesli is usually a ready-to-eat healthy option, with added nuts and sugar to make it tasty and crunchy. But processing lowers its fibre content, and additives and preservatives increase calories and sugar. One can kickstart the day with a healthy bowl of oats or muesli soaked in milk or yogurt.



OR



Veg momo
(One serving)

Aloo tikki chaat
(One serving)

200-250	CALORIES	**300-350**
2g	PROTEIN	**2g**
10g	FAT	**15-20g**
30-35g	CARBS	**35-40g**
Negligible	FIBRE	**3g**
200-500mg*	SODIUM	**200-500mg***

*Depending on added salt and sauces

Momos are usually made with unhealthy refined flour (maida), which is zero on fibre and causes sugar spike and weight gain. If fried, momos can pile up on the calories. One can opt for steamed whole wheat momos instead, along with portion control. Aloo tikki is already high on calories and carbs. It's not recommended for diabetics and those with insulin resistance. It can be an occasional treat, though, with portion control and veggies thrown in to make it a healthy choice.



OR



Corn chips	1 packet (28g)	Potato chips
143	CALORIES	**149**
2g	PROTEIN	**2.1g**
7g	FAT	**8g**
18g	CARBS	**15g**
161mg	SODIUM	**300mg**

Corn chips and potato chips are both processed snacks with no nutritional benefit. They are high on calories and carbs, and low on protein per serve. Being packaged food, both have excess sodium, additives and preservatives. Between the two, corn chips are slightly better as they are gluten free, with a lower sodium content and slightly more fibre content. In order to make it a healthy snack option, it's best to opt for baked, low-sodium or salt-free versions that can be paired with healthy dips like hummus, curd dips or guacamole.



OR



Almonds 1 serving		Sunflower seeds 1 serving
163	CALORIES	**166**
6g	PROTEIN	**6.4g**
5.6g	CARBS	**5.3g**
Negligible	SUGAR	**Negligible**
15g	FAT	**14g**
4g	FIBRE	**3g**
Negligible	SODIUM	**Negligible**

When it comes to healthy snacks, nuts and seeds are the best. Almonds are a gluten-free, vegetarian source of protein with high quality fats and good fibre content. They are a powerhouse of nutrients that help protect the heart, aid weight management, are good for diabetics and for skin health. Sunflower seeds are also loaded with nutrients and can be sprinkled over salads or smoothies. However, one must rule out nut and seed allergies before consuming them.



OR



Granola bar

1 serving

Peanut chikki

1 serving

150-200	CALORIES	**125**
3-8g	PROTEIN	**4g**
30g	CARBS	**11.6g**
10g	SUGAR	**10g**
2-5g	FIBRE	**1.2g**
5-10g	FAT	**7.2g**
50-100mg	SODIUM	**4mg**

Granola bars and peanut chikkis can be nutritious snacking options, especially while travelling. Granola bars are pre-portioned bars made with oats, nuts, seeds and dried fruit. But some commercially produced ones are loaded with sugars, calories and artificial flavours. Choose homemade ones or healthy bars with natural sugars like dates or figs. Peanut chikki is a good source of protein and healthy fats and goes well with the Indian palate. But have the healthier ones made with jaggery. Portion control is crucial to cut sugar, calories.

Which of these foods has the most protein and the least calories?

In India, protein awareness is increasing but not all sources are equal. For instance, peanut butter has protein but you can't eat too much because it can come loaded with added sugar. Paneer, an excellent source of protein, is high on fat while tofu comes with half the calories. Here's a ready reckoner...

Contents	Cal/100g	Protein/100g
Peanut butter	635	25
Almonds	610	20
Chia seeds	530	20
Chickpea	385	20
Quinoa	330	15
Dal	325	25
Processed cheese	310	20
Paneer	280	20
Chicken	170	22
Avocado	160	2
Tofu	115	15





Oatmeal cookie 1 serving		Choco-chip cookie 1 serving
91	CALORIES	**91**
2.1g	PROTEIN	**1g**
11.9g	CARBS	**10.1g**
4.7g	SUGAR	**6g**
0.9g	FIBRE	**Negligible**
4.1g	FAT	**5.2g**
46.7mg	SODIUM	**24mg**

OR

Cookies are a favourite snack for kids and adults alike, whether made from oatmeal or chocolate chips. But homemade is best as oatmeal cookies from the store are often loaded with sugar, butter, additives, colouring agents and emulsifiers. Always check the label before buying. Choco-chip cookies taste yummy alright but are high on sugar and fat, with no healthy nutrients. So, controlling portion size is important.



OR



Noodles	1 serving	Pasta
250-270	CALORIES	220-250
6g	PROTEIN	6-7g
41g	CARBS	35g
Negligible	FIBRE	Negligible
10g	FAT	10g
500-700mg	SODIUM	500-700mg

Most commercially produced noodles and pasta are made from refined flour (maida), which is high on simple carbs and low on fibre, making them unsuitable for those with diabetes. Instant noodles are even worse as they also contain trans fats, and are high on sodium and preservatives. But one can opt for whole grain or millet noodles, and add plenty of vegetables for more fibre and nutrients. White creamy sauces (and the tomato-based ones) added to store-bought pasta piles on the calories and can cause a sugar spike. Whole grain pasta is a much healthier option owing to its higher fibre and protein content. But don't forget to pair it with lean protein and veggies to make it a balanced meal.



Cow milk (1 glass) OR Buffalo milk (1 glass)

145	CALORIES	**200**
6.4g	PROTEIN	**7.3g**
9g	FAT	**13g**
5.4g	SATURATED FAT	**9.2g**
9.8g	CARBS	**16.5g**
236mg	CALCIUM	**242mg**

Milk is perhaps the most nutritious beverage, rich in protein, calcium and vitamins A, D, B2 (riboflavin) and B12. It's also packed with minerals like zinc, phosphorus, iodine, potassium and selenium. Cow milk is lighter in comparison to buffalo milk and easier to digest. But both are high on fat, especially saturated fat. So, people with weight issues, heart disease and diabetes should consume toned/skimmed versions. However, those who are lactose intolerant or allergic to milk can consume curd, lactose-free milk or plant-based alternatives.



OR



Curd rice 1 serving		Khichdi 1 serving
180-220	CALORIES	**200-250**
4-6g	PROTEIN	**6-8g**
4-6g	FAT	**5-8g**
30-35g	CARBS	**30-35g**
Negligible	FIBRE	**2-4g** (higher with veggies)
Yes	PROBIOTICS	**No**

Curd rice and khichdi are excellent gluten-free comfort foods in their own right, though they differ in taste and nutritional profiles. Curd rice, made with cold or leftover rice and curd, is rich in probiotics and, therefore, great for gut health. It's lower in calories with a good protein and calcium content and has a cooling effect on the stomach, aiding digestion. Khichdi, made with rice, lentils and some veggies, is a balanced meal in itself that provides plant-based protein along with fibre. It is ideal during illness or recovery. Both these foods are healthy choices depending on one's dietary needs and preferences.



OR



Dosa

1 serving

Moong dal cheela

1 serving

170	CALORIES	**120**
4g	PROTEIN	**7g**
27g	CARBS	**14g**
0.9g	FIBRE	**2-3g**
5g	FAT	**5g**
90-100mg	SODIUM	**100mg**

Both have slightly different nutritional profiles but are equally healthy breakfast options. Dosa, native to South India, is made from fermented rice and lentil paste. It's high on probiotics, easy to digest and makes for a balanced meal. Moong dal cheela is a traditional North Indian dish made from moong bean paste. It's a high source of vegetarian protein and fibre, making it ideal for weight loss. However, both can be high on calories depending on the amount of oil added, stuffings like potato or paneer and the type of chutney taken along with them.



OR



Kulfi falooda 1 serving		Chia pudding 1 serving
350-500	CALORIES	**180-250**
45-70g	CARBS	**12-18g**
6-8g	PROTEIN	**6-10g**
15-25g	FAT	**10-15g**
30-50g	SUGAR	**4-8g**
1-3g	FIBRE	**8-12g**

Kulfi falooda is milk thickened & frozen, topped with sabja seeds, vermicelli, rose syrup, and sugar. Chia pudding is chia seeds topped with milk, fruits/nuts, & a mild sweetener. Kulfi falooda is low-fibre & high on calories, fat, sugar, which can cause an insulin spike. Chia pudding is low-GI, high-fibre (gut health, satiety), and better for metabolic health. Kulfi falooda is an occasional treat, but chia pudding is functional food.



OR



Coconut water		Buttermilk
100ml		100ml
18-20	CALORIES	**40-60**
3-4g*	CARBS	**4-5g**
0.2-0.7g	PROTEIN	**3-4g**
Nil	FAT	**1-2g†**

* Natural sugars, † Depends on dilution

Coconut water and buttermilk (chhaas) are both low calorie, hydrating and cooling drinks. Coconut water is rich in electrolytes, especially potassium, and works like a mild IV drip since it is closest to body fluids. It also works well for heat and dehydration. Buttermilk has protein and calcium, and also supports good bacteria in the gut. If the focus is on gut, inflammation and long-term metabolic health, then buttermilk is a better bet. For hydration and recovery, coconut water wins, especially for those who cannot tolerate dairy. Both are best had in the earlier part of the day.



OR



Veg Caesar salad

1 bowl

Bread pulao

1 bowl

180-260	CALORIES	**320-380**
12-18g	CARBS	**45-55g**
6-10g (more with cheese)	PROTEIN	**7-9g**
12-20g (from dressing)	FAT	**12-16g**
4-6g	FIBRE	**3-5g**

Vegetarian Caesar salad has lettuce and crunchy croutons (small bread cubes, toasted or fried) tossed in a Caesar dressing (garlic, mustard, capers/olives, Greek yogurt/ cashews, lemon juice, parmesan, olive oil). Bread pulao has bread cubes shallow fried with onions, chillies, tomatoes, curry leaves, veggies and spices. The salad is high-fibre, low-carb and GI, and anti-inflammatory. Protein tweaks can improve satiety, making it better for those with obesity and diabetes. Bread pulao is mostly refined flour, with a high GI, moderate satiety and low fibre, despite the veggies.





Dosa

1 serving

Pancake

1 serving

120-150	CALORIES	**200-300**
20-25g	CARBS	**18-22g**
3-5g	PROTEIN	**4-6g**
3-5g	FAT	**4-7g**
1.5-2.5g	FIBRE	**0.5-1g**

Dosa is a savoury breakfast made with a fermented batter of rice and urad dal, whereas a pancake is usually sweet, and made with refined flour (maida), eggs and milk. Dosa is rich in B vitamins and some fibre. Being fermented, its probiotic potential makes it better for gut health and general well-being. The maida in pancakes increases the glycemic load, and it's often paired with sugar syrup which can cause blood sugar spikes. Pancakes can be fine occasionally, and can be healthy only if modified thoughtfully.



OR



Khichdi 1 bowl		Risotto 1 bowl
200-300	CALORIES	**350-500**
35-45g	CARBS	**40-52g**
8-14g	PROTEIN	**7-10g**
3-8g	FAT	**15-25g**
4-7g	FIBRE	**1-3g**

Khichdi is the quintessential comfort food — rice and lentils, minimal oil or ghee, vegetables and spices boiled together. Risotto is a decadent mix of rice, butter, olive oil, cheese and stock, simmered and finished with cream. Khichdi is anti-inflammatory and easy to digest. It's higher in protein and fibre, and low on fat. But risotto is a high-fat indulgence. Khichdi is everyday fuel. Risotto is a weekend or celebration food best had in small portions.



OR



Chicken puff

1 piece

Chicken roll

1 piece

350-500	CALORIES	**250-400**
25-35g	CARBS	**20-40g**
8-15g	PROTEIN	**18-25g**
20-30g	FAT	**10-20g**
400-700mg	SODIUM	**500-900mg**

A chicken puff has a small amount of chicken filling inside a puff pastry (which is basically refined flour and butter/margarine) that is baked after being brushed with an egg wash or more butter. A chicken roll is a roti or paratha, pan fried or grilled and stuffed with a generous chicken filling. A chicken roll is generally healthier than a chicken puff, especially if made with whole grain or healthy wraps. A chicken puff is more of a treat, but is pro-inflammatory and high in trans fats.



OR



Matcha latte

Coffee latte

1 cup (240ml), 2% milk, no added sugar

70mg	CAFFEINE	**100-150mg**
120-140	CALORIES	**120-130**
16-20g	CARBS	**12-15g**
8g	PROTEIN	**8g**
4-5g	FAT	**4-5g**
12-14g	SUGAR	**12-14g**

Matcha latte and coffee latte have comparable calories and nearly identical protein, fat and sugar content. Though matcha latte has slightly more carbs, coffee latte has more than double the caffeine. Matcha wins in antioxidants with catechins and L-theanine, which promotes calm focus, reduces caffeine jitters, and supports metabolism. But coffee latte has a stronger stimulant effect, may help with alertness and cognitive performance, and is easier to digest for some, though others may experience acidity.



OR



Papad 1 piece (~10g)		Khakra 1 piece (~30g)
30-35	CALORIES	**120-140**
6-8g	CARBS	**18-22g**
Negligible	FAT	**4-5g**
2-2.5g	PROTEIN	**3-4g**
120-180mg	SODIUM	**120-200mg**

Papad is not really a contributor to protein even though it's made of dal, which is a protein itself. A crunchy accompaniment to meals or a snack, it's low on calories but high on sodium. Those with kidney disease, high blood pressure or obesity need to watch their papad intake. And fried ones add on extra fat. A Khakra is fiber-rich and filling, but calorie-dense and high in carbohydrates. It's a good travel snack option, though. It's best to have both in small portions and be mindful of frequency.



OR



Potatoes (100gm, raw)		Sweet potatoes (100gm, raw)
77	CALORIES	**86**
17.5g	CARBS	**20.1g**
2g	PROTEIN	**1.6g**
2.2g	FIBRE	**3g**
0.8g	SUGAR	**4.2g**

Potatoes and sweet potatoes are virtually fat-free, and almost similar in calorie and carb content. But sweet potatoes are naturally sweeter, with more fibre, and an excellent source of vit A and calcium. They are lower on the glycemic index, so better for blood sugar control and weight loss. Potatoes are richer in vit C, potassium, with slightly more protein. If boiled or baked instead of fried, both can be nutritious. Boiling and cooling would increase their resistant starch and benefit the gut. But both are high on carbs, so moderation is key.



OR



Butter naan 1 piece		Pita bread 1 piece
360-400	CALORIES	**160-170**
12-15g	FAT	**<1.5g**
35-50g	CARBS	**33-36g**

For butter naan, the dough is made of refined flour, with added butter or ghee, rolled out and cooked in a tandoor with more butter added on top. Pita bread dough is also made of refined flour but is yeast fermented, pocket-style, with no added fat. Both are rich in carbs, so those who are watching their weight and/or have metabolic issues should opt for low inflammatory grains. They are fine as an occasional indulgence and best paired with protein and fibre to blunt the glucose spike.



OR



Samosa 1 serving		Bread pakora 1 serving
250-300	CALORIES	**300-350**
3-4g	PROTEIN	**3-6g**
30-35g	CARBS	**30-35g**
2-3g	FIBRE	**2-3g**
15-20g	FAT	**15-20g**
250-300mg	SODIUM	**300-350mg**

Both are deep fried, high on fats, calorie-dense and unhealthy. Samosa is made with refined flour (maida), so is bread pakora. Also, both have a spiced potato stuffing that piles on the carbs. Make them healthy with whole wheat flour, paneer and pea stuffings. Baking or air frying will help reduce oil/fat intake.



OR



Aloo tikki 1 piece (50-60g)		Falafel 1 piece (50-60g)
150-180	CALORIES	**120-140**
20-24g	CARBS	**13-15g**
1-2g	PROTEIN	**3-4g**
8-10g	FAT	**6-8g**
1-2g	FIBRE	**3-4g**

Aloo tikkis are potatoes and spices mashed together into patties and fried. Rich in carbs and potassium, they are higher in calories when deep-fried, with little protein and fibre. Falafels are deep-fried chickpea balls with herbs, sesame seeds, and spices. Higher in protein, fibre, micronutrients and healthy fats, they are a good source of iron, folate and magnesium. Lower on the GI, they make a more nutritious snack if baked instead of fried. Aloo tikkis can be made healthy if peas or lentils are added, and if the patties are pan-fried in minimal oil.



OR



Plum cake	1 slice	Black forest pastry
330-360	CALORIES	380-420
50-55g	CARBS	55-65g
28-32g	SUGAR	35-40g
12-16g	FAT	20-25g
3-5g	PROTEIN	4-5g
150-220mg	SODIUM	180-250mg

A plum cake is a rich Christmas fruit cake with raisins and prunes that offer micronutrients like iron and potassium, as well as some fibre. Black forest pastry has layers of chocolate sponge cake with whipped cream and cherries in between, more cream on top with dark chocolate shavings and cherries as garnish. It's heavier on calories, fat, sugar and refined carbs. Plum cake is healthier but it's still a dessert and calorie dense. So, festive indulgence is good but portion control is better.

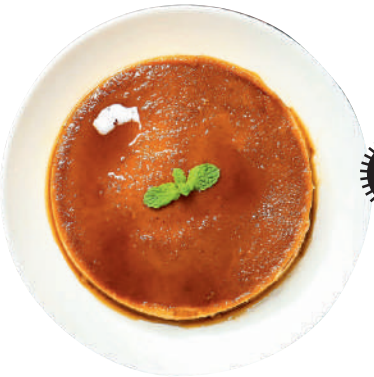


OR



Shahi tukra 1 serving		Tiramisu 1 serving
380-420	CALORIES	**320-350**
40-45g	CARBS	**30-35g**
25-30g	SUGAR	**18-22g**
18-22g	FAT	**20-24g**
7-9g	PROTEIN	**6-7g**

Shahi tukra is deep fried bread soaked in sugar syrup, with rabri on top. Tiramisu is biscuit soaked in coffee, layered with a whipped mix of mascarpone cheese, cream, egg yolks and sugar, and cocoa powder dusted on top. Dairy in shahi tukra gives protein and calcium. But deep-frying bread forms harmful AGEs (advanced glycation end products), which can increase oxidative stress and worsen bloating, acid reflux and gut inflammation. Tiramisu has coffee polyphenols that may support microbial diversity. It's a better choice with portion control.



OR



Caramel custard 100g		Rice kheer 100g
130-150	CALORIES	**140-170**
20-25g	CARBS	**22-28g**
14-18g	SUGAR	**15-20g**
3-5g	FAT	**4-6g**
3.5-5g	PROTEIN	**2-3g**

Caramel custard is a mixture of whisked eggs, milk, sugar, and vanilla extract poured onto caramelised sugar, then steamed or baked in a water bath. Rice kheer is rice cooked with milk and sugar or jaggery (often some ghee), flavoured with cardamom and saffron. Though high on sugar, both have good calcium. Similar in fat, rice kheer is slightly higher on calories, carbs. Caramel custard is healthier as it has 50–100% more protein owing to the milk and eggs, lower carbs, and doesn't cause a grain spike like rice kheer.



OR



Sorbet 1 serving		Gelato 1 serving
120	CALORIES	**220**
Nil	PROTEIN	**3-4g**
30g	CARBS	**20g**
28g	SUGAR	**20g**
Nil	FAT	**15g**

Sorbet is a low-calorie, dairy-free and mostly fat-free dessert made of fruit purée, water and lots of sugar. Gelato has milk, sugar, cream, and sometimes eggs. It's got more protein and fat, but is calorie dense. Both should be occasional treats.



Atta instant noodles

(100g, dry)

Korean ramen

(100g, dry)

400-500	CALORIES	**400-450**
60-65g	CARBS	**60-70g**
8-12g	PROTEIN	**8-11g**
13-20g	FAT	**10-17g**
4-8g	FIBRE	**Negligible**

Both are often pre-fried, but atta noodles are made from whole wheat flour that retains bran, germ and endosperm. So it's high on fibre which helps in digestion. Atta better retains micronutrients like iron, B vitamins, magnesium and zinc, and has higher satiety, unlike Korean ramen, refined flour (maida) noodles that leads to faster blood sugar spikes. Frying adds to unhealthy fats for both. Seasonings are high on sodium and MSG. Both are also calorie dense, so moderation is key.

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