

12 Best Fiber Foods

When you think of fiber, do you think of bran flakes and Metamucil? Whether you have diabetes or not, it's smart to look at a food's fiber-to-carbs ratio. Carbs raise blood sugar but fiber can moderate that rise.

Fiber comes with a host of other health benefits, too -- not the least of which is that fiber foods fill you up, so help beat back the flab!

Here are 12 to add to your grocery list today ...

1. AVOCADO. One whole, medium avocado contains 17 grams of carbohydrate and a truly impressive 11 grams of fiber. That's almost half of the daily recommended minimum intake of fiber!*

The avocado is a real diabetes superfood, providing an excellent dose of those good-for-you, unsaturated fatty acids. And avocados deliver almost 20 vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients -- the special plant chemicals that convey myriad health benefits. Plus, what is more fun than growing an avocado plant from the pit?

Guacamole tip: To keep avocado dips from turning brown, press plastic wrap down into bowl and smooth it tight to the edges, leaving no air pockets.

* Current recommendations say that adults should get between 20g and 35g of fiber daily.

2. ARTICHOKE. A medium artichoke contains about 14 grams of carbs and 10 grams of fiber. Like avocados, artichokes are bursting with nutrients, including an impressive amount of antioxidants, an excellent dose of vitamin C, as well as folate, potassium and magnesium. And did you know? A medium artichoke also delivers 4 grams of protein.

If you didn't grow up with artichokes, don't be intimidated by the funny looking globes. Just snip off the stem and a half-inch off the top, pull off five or six of the outermost leaves, and steam for 30 minutes or microwave in a couple inches of water for 7 to 10 minutes.

3. RASPBERRIES. A cup of these delicate, vibrant berries contains 15 grams of carbs and 8 grams of fiber. High in vitamin C and several other nutrients, they are packed with antioxidants and have anti-inflammatory properties as well. The phytochemicals that make plant foods red, orange, or blue are potent disease fighters.

4. BLACKBERRIES. Like raspberries, blackberries are rich in those health-giving pigments that give them their beautiful, deep blue-black coloring. They deliver the same amount of

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carbohydrate and fiber as raspberries, too. A cup contains 15 grams of carbs and 8 grams of fiber.

Raspberries and blackberries are both known as "bramble" fruit, and an increasing number of studies are showing that these and other intensely colored fruits and veggies improve health and fight disease.

5. LENTILS. One half-cup of lentils contains about 10 grams of carbs and 8 grams of fiber. Lentils fall into that fancy-sounding food category known as legumes, which are veggies that grow in pods.

Legumes are great sources of protein and fiber, but also contain lots of health-giving compounds. One type is called saponins, which may help lower cholesterol and blood glucose levels and reduce disease risks.

Did you know? Lentils do not require soaking, so buy some and throw them into some broth with a couple chopped vegetables and, presto, soup!

6. BLACK BEANS. Black beans are a type of legume, too, and contain all the same great health benefits as lentils. A bit higher in carbs at 22 grams, a half-cup of black beans delivers a hearty 7 grams of fiber. And if you subtract the fiber from the carbs, you end up with a manageable 15 grams of carbs in a serving.

7. BROCCOLI. Well, you *knew* you'd find this vegetable on the list, didn't you? One cup of broccoli contains just 9 grams of carbs and a nice 6 grams of fiber. Broccoli is a member of the cruciferous vegetable family, and these superfoods are known to have anti-cancer properties, among a host of other body benefits.

Remember not to overcook broccoli, or its nutrients begin to fade. Use a potato peeler to take off the outer layer on the stalks, then chop them into one-inch pieces. This allows them to cook in the amount of time needed for the florettes.

8. VEGETABLE BEEF SOUP. Go figure. A can of Campbell's Low Sodium Chunky Vegetable Beef soup contains 18 grams of carbs, 6 grams of fiber, and 14 grams of protein. And it contains just 90 mg of sodium. You have to search for this exact variety, however. If one word is different on the label, you'll get a whole different nutrition profile. You may also want to just make your own.

9. PEAR. A medium pear contains 20 grams of carbs and 4.5 grams of fiber. Be sure to wash them well and eat the skin. Fiber and other nutrients live in that thin outer layer of the fruit. *Slice*
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pears and drizzle with lemon juice to keep them from turning brown, give a nice tart counterpoint to their juicy, sweetness, and to moderate your blood sugar response.

10. APPLE. An apple a day provides great phytonutrients (phyto=plant) and a good dose of fiber. One medium apple contains about 23 grams of carbs and 4 grams of fiber. Again, wash well and eat the skin. You should know by now that the deep red color is an indicator of nature's potent disease-fighting chemicals. *Tip: Stores carry such a variety of apples these days, you should never be stuck with a dry or mealy batch. Stage taste tests at home to discover new favorites.*

11. OATMEAL. A cup of cooked oatmeal contains 27 grams of carbs and 4 grams of fiber. Use old-fashioned rolled oat or steel-cut oats for the best health bang for your buck. These are the least processed varieties and retain the most nutrients and fiber.

With rolled oats, mix one part oats to two parts cold water and simmer for 15 minutes or microwave for two, stir, then microwave again until you get desired consistency. Add ground flaxseed, or a dash of a flax, almond, or walnut oil. A little butter will work, too. Then you can add your cinnamon, sweetener, and milk or cream. Quick tip: Store your oats in the fridge. The oils in them can go rancid over time.

12. BARLEY. Barley holds the honor of being the lowest-glycemic grain (of the grains officially tested so far). This means it is the grain least likely to spike your blood sugar. A half-cup of cooked pearl barley contains 22 grams of carbs and 3 grams of fiber. If you can find the less processed, "hull-less" barley, you'll get even more fiber and more blood sugar protection.

Barley is mild, tender, and versatile -- it can be used in place of rice, as an ingredient in soups, or in the morning like oatmeal.

To help you reach the recommended 25g to 35g per day, here are some fiber superstars you can keep in your fridge and sprinkle on top of salads, soups, sides and more:

- 2 Tbsp. Chia Seeds: 11g fiber (12g carbs)
- 1/4 cup Roasted Soybeans: 7.5g fiber (14.5g carbs)
- 1/4 cup Toasted Wheat Bran: 7g fiber (10g carbs)
- 1 ounce Coconut Flakes, unsweetened: 5g fiber (7g carbs)
- 1/4 cup Almonds: 4.25g fiber (7.75g carbs)
- 1 ounce, Toasted Sesame Seeds: 4g fiber (7g carbs)
- 2 Tbsp. Ground Flaxseed: 4g fiber (4g carbs) 