



Printable Anti-Inflammatory Diet Food List

The following list is divided into anti-inflammatory foods, foods to avoid (pro-inflammatory), anti-inflammatory herbs and spices, and less inflammatory fast food options.

ANTI-INFLAMMATORY FOODS

Vegetables

Vegetable Types	Foods	Beneficial Effects
Tomatoes	Tomatoes, tomato juice, tomato sauce, tomato paste, salsa	Contain beta-carotene, vitamin C, and lycopene. Lycopene is a powerful antioxidants.
Leafy greens and cruciferous vegetables	Kale, spinach, lettuce (iceberg, head, romaine, or leaf), broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, parsley, watercress	Contain many potent antioxidants (beta-carotene, folacin, magnesium, calcium, glucosinolates, isothiocyanates, lutein, and indoles); contain flavonoids and polyphenols.
Deep yellow or orange vegetables and fruit	Cantaloupe, peaches, carrots, dark yellow or orange squash, figs	Contain carotenoids which are strong antioxidants
Other vegetables	Okra, green peppers, onions, zucchini, and eggplant	Contain antioxidants and polyphenols

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Fruits

Fruit Types	Foods	Beneficial Effects
Apples and berries	Fresh apples, pears, apple juice or cider, strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, cherries	Contain flavonoids which are powerful antioxidants (anthocyanins, quercetin, and phenolic acids).
Other fruits and real fruit juices in limited amounts	Pineapples, honeydew, grapes, kiwi, watermelon, lemon, grapefruit, and oranges, orange juice, grapefruit juice, grape juice, and other real fruit juice	Contain lots of antioxidants (flavonoids, such as hesperidin, naringenin, neohesperidin, limonene, vitamin C, plant sterols, beta-cryptoxanthin, salicylates, naringin, nobelitin, and narirutin).

Beverages

Beverage Types	Examples	Beneficial Effects
Coffee	Coffee (decaffeinated and regular)	Coffee contains phytochemicals and antioxidants, such as javamide.
Tea	Herbal and non-herbal tea	Tea contains flavonoids and antioxidants (epicatechin and quercetin).
Both coffee and tea contain varying amounts of caffeine, which reduces inflammatory production.		

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Protein Sources

Protein Types	Foods	Beneficial Effects
Poultry	Chicken or turkey with and without skin	Associated with reduced inflammation. Low saturated fat and contains L-arginine, which helps prevent build-up of plaque in the arteries.
Fish	Tuna fish, salmon, other light and dark meat fish, breaded fish cakes or fish sticks	Contain omega -3 fats which compete with proinflammatory omega-6 fats and reduce inflammation.
Nuts	Peanut butter, peanuts, other nuts	Contain omega-3 fats and L-arginine.
High-fat and low-fat dairy	Whole, 2%, 1%, skim milk, cream, high-fat and low-fat ice cream, high-fat and low-fat yogurt, cream cheese, high-fat and low-fat cheeses, low-fat cottage or ricotta cheese	Contains calcium, which binds bile acids and fat, decreasing inflammatory damage in the gut; dairy fat contains fatty acids with potential inflammation-reducing properties
Legumes	String beans, peas, lima beans, lentils, and other beans (excluding soybeans)	Contain folacin, iron, isoflavones, protein, vitamin B6, and have a high antioxidant levels. Rich in fiber, beneficial to the gut microbiota, reducing immune response in the gut.



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PRO-INFLAMMATORY FOODS TO AVOID

Protein Sources

Protein Types	Foods	Negative Effects
Red and organ meats	Hamburger, beef, pork, lamb, liver, gizzards, other organ meats	Contain heme iron, which in excess causes inflammation. Contain omega-6 fats, which stimulates inflammation. Contain saturated fats that increase inflammation in the gut and colon.
Processed meats	Bacon, beef or pork hotdogs, chicken or turkey hot dogs, salami, bologna, other processed meats	Contains heme iron, higher saturated fat, omega-6 fats, and additives like nitrites, with inflammatory effects.

A [large prospective study](#) including 134,297 adults found no significant associations between unprocessed red meat and death or heart disease. Processed meat was associated with higher rates of death, cancer, and heart disease.

The [DIS research](#) put red and organ meats with a slight inflammatory rating. Whereas, processed meat was associated strongly with inflammatory effects.

If you enjoy red meat, try to choose unprocessed beef. I recommend [grass-fed, pasture-raised beef](#) for its increased vitamin A and E content and antioxidant levels compared to grain-fed beef. Grass-fed beef is [lower in saturated fat](#) and has more omega-3 fats compared to omega-6 fats.

Grass-fed beef is typically more expensive. Try reducing your beef intake to once a week (or less) and this might provide some wiggle room in your food budget and ensures you eat a variety of protein sources (like fish, nuts, and poultry).



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PRO-INFLAMMATORY FOODS TO AVOID

Fats and Added Sugar

Type	Foods	Negative Effects
Other fats	Mayonnaise, margarine, butter, vegetable oil	Contain omega-6 and saturated fats which increase inflammation.
Added sugars	Sugar-sweetened soda, punch, lemonade, chocolate candy bars, mixed candy bars, non-chocolate candy, jams, jellies, preserves, syrup or honey, dried or canned fruit with sugar	Lack nutrients; cause high blood sugar which causes repeated inflammation. Increase inflammatory fat levels and inflammation in all body systems.



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PRO-INFLAMMATORY FOODS TO AVOID

Refined Grains and Starchy Vegetables

Type	Foods	Negative Effects
Refried Grains	Cold and cooked breakfast cereal, white or dark processed low-fiber bread, bagels, English muffins, rolls, corn bread, white rice, pasta, pancakes, waffles, crackers, tortillas, popcorn, pretzels, cookies, brownies, doughnuts, cake, pie, sweet rolls, coffee cakes, granola bars	<p>Some processed grains contain emulsifiers, which potentially break down mucin in the gut leading to inflammation.</p> <p>Lack nutrients; cause high blood sugar like added sugar which causes repeated inflammation. Increase inflammatory fat levels and inflammation in all body systems.</p>
Starchy Vegetables	Potatoes (french fried, scalloped, baked, boiled or mashed), sweet potato/yams, potato chips	<p>Cause high blood sugar and when repeated increases inflammation. Adding sugar or fats promotes inflammation.</p>

Note: starchy vegetables can be a wonderful addition to your diet. Sweet potato and yams have anti-inflammatory properties!

The yellow variety contains carotenoids and fiber which help protect the body against chronic disease. A purple sweet potato contains anthocyanin (another antioxidant helping in reducing inflammation).

Preparation matters so avoid frying, loading with sugar or marshmallows, or adding large amounts of fat to maintain anti-inflammatory benefits.



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ANTI-INFLAMMATORY SPICES AND HERBS

The DIS research did not include any spices or herbs that reduce inflammation. Research from the DII lists anti-inflammatory components of a diet mostly focusing on macronutrients (protein, fat, and carbohydrate) and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals).

However, some spices and herbs are singled out for their anti-inflammatory effect on the DII! These are listed from highest to lowest for their anti-inflammatory strength.

Anti-Inflammatory Spices and Herbs

- 1. Turmeric**
- 2. Ginger**
- 3. Garlic**
- 4. Onion**
- 5. Saffron**
- 6. Pepper**
- 7. Thyme/Oregano**
- 8. Rosemary**

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LESS INFLAMMATORY HEALTHIER FAST FOOD OPTIONS

Restaurant	Foods
Chick-fil-A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greek Yogurt Parfait with Granola • Fruit Cup • Grilled Chicken Sandwich on Multigrain Bun with Lettuce and Tomato • Grilled Nuggets • Chick-fil-A Cool Wrap • Cobb Salad with grilled chicken • Spicy Southwest Salad with grilled chicken • Market Salad with grilled chicken • Side Salad • Kale Crunch Side • Buddy Fruits Apple Sauce • Unsweetened Iced Tea • Black Coffee • 1% Milk
Taco Bell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chipotle Ranch Grilled Chicken Burrito (Fresco and Light Sauce) • Fiesta Veggie Burrito • Black Beans • Power Menu Bowl (cheese and ranch sauce on the side to add less) • Unsweetened Iced Tea • Black Coffee
Starbucks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rolled & Steel-Cut Oatmeal • Cheese & Fruit Protein Box • Eggs & Cheddar Protein Box • Black Coffee • Herbal and Hot Unsweetened Teas • Chai Tea • Teavana Sparkling Unsweetened Peach Nectarine Green Tea • 1% Milk

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LESS INFLAMMATORY HEALTHIER FAST FOOD OPTIONS

Wendy's	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● All Fresh-Made Salads (except Taco Salad)● Grilled Chicken Wrap● Apple Bites● Chili● Plain Baked Potato● Black Coffee● Unsweetened Iced Tea
Chipotle	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Burrito Bowl (Chicken, Steak, or Veggie, Brown Rice, Black or Pinto Beans, All Salsas, Fajita Veggies, Romaine Lettuce, Cheese and Guacamole)● All Lifestyle Bowls● Salad (Chicken, Steak, or Veggie, Brown Rice, Black or Pinto Beans, All Salsas, Fajita Veggies, Romaine Lettuce, Cheese and Guacamole)● San Pellegrino Sparkling Water● Topo Chico Mineral Water
Subway	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● No Bready Bowls (Grilled or Rotisserie-Style Chicken, Oven-Roasted Turkey, or Tuna)● Wraps (Veggie Delite, Grilled or Rotisserie-Style Chicken, Oven-Roasted Turkey, or Tuna)● Salads (Veggie Delite, Grilled or Rotisserie-Style Chicken, Oven-Roasted Turkey, or Tuna)● 1% Milk● Black Coffee