

sugar. In terms of human consumption, the most commonly used are beetroot, chard and green leaf beet. They are rich in cellulose, and can therefore stimulate intestinal peristalsis. 100 g of beet contains 91 g of water, 1.1 g of protein, 4 g/100 kcal of glucides, vitamins B1, B2, PP, C, and mineral salts such as potassium, sodium, phosphorus, calcium, iron, zinc and copper.



Berries

In general, berries are rich in vitamins (A, B1, B2 and C), mineral salts and fibre. Raspberries have diuretic and energy-providing properties, as well as containing minerals, fibres and organic acids. Currants are rich in phosphorus, magnesium, flavonoids, provitamin A and vitamin C. They have anti-inflammatory properties and protect blood vessels, as do cranberries. Blue cranberries contain a polyphenol antioxidant that can reduce the level of “bad” cholesterol LDL. Only small quantities should be taken, 2-3 times a week.

Bicarbonate of soda

Traditionally, a teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda in water is used to soften chickpeas and beans. However, we do not recommend this, as it destroys most of the vitamins.

Bread

Some breads have a low Glycaemic Index (GI), including those made from barley, wheat bran, soya seed, linseed, multigrains and mixed stoneground wholemeal cereals.

Broad beans

Rich in fibre and soluble fibre, broad beans help to lower cholesterol levels. They also contain

vitamins, mineral salts, flavonoids and quercetina that combat cardiovascular diseases.

Broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower

These vegetables are rich in fibre, antioxidants, vitamins A, C and beta carotene; as such, they are useful in combating heart diseases. They also contain indole-3-carbinol, a plant hormone that is thought to protect against the risk of breast cancer. Cabbage juice is a useful aid for gastroduodenal ulcers and ulcerative colitis. Many people are put off by the unpleasant cooking smell that cabbage emits. This can be lessened by placing a wad of vinegar-soaked cotton on the lid of the saucepan, or by adding some lemon juice, a walnut or a bunch of parsley into the pan.

Butter

Butter is especially popular in Northern Europe. It is made from cream and can be bought with or without salt. 200 g of butter contains 12.2 g of water, 0.3 g of protein, 87 g of lipids, 0.4 g of glucides and 230 mg of cholesterol. It has a very high stearic acid content, which is closely related to the onset of cardiovascular diseases. Butter must be avoided completely by those suffering from hypercholesterolemia, arteriosclerosis and cardio-circulatory diseases. The use of low-fat and low-cholesterol butters must be very carefully measured.



Cabbage (see broccoli)

Cardamom

These seeds come from tropical plants that grow naturally in Asia. They are popular in cooking due to their aromatic, spicy taste. They are also used as condiments for meats and in the preparation of breads, liquors and infusions.

Carrots

Carrots are rich in beta carotene, which has excellent anti-oxidising properties that combat heart diseases and cancer. They also protect against eye diseases and skin damage caused by the sun. They have a high Glycaemic Index, especially when cooked. To be taken in moderation by diabetics.

Celery

Laboratory tests on mice have demonstrated that the regular consumption of celery lowers blood pressure by 13% and cholesterolemia by 7%. Its efficacy on people has yet to be confirmed.

Cereals

A great source of energy. Barley refreshes, detoxifies and plays an important antiseptic role in the intestine. Wholegrain rice contains a lot of essential amino acids and is a good source of group B vitamins. Millet is easily digested and contains a high proportion of magnesium, phosphorus, silicon, iron and manganese. Oats are an excellent source of vitamin E and are rich in proteins, while having a very low sugar content. They contain a well-balanced mixture of saturated and unsaturated fats. Consuming oatmeal every day helps the heart and the circulation, regulates glycaemia, improves the skin and lowers cholesterol levels.



The most complete cereal is wheat, from which we get the flour used to make bread and pasta. Corn, on the other hand, is used to make the flour for polenta. Cereals are rich in carbohydrates (70%) and medium-quality proteins. Products containing cereals (e.g., pasta, bread, polenta), along with other foods rich in carbohydrates (e.g., fruit and vegetables)

should provide 55% of our daily calorie intake. Wholemeal flour, oats and barley generally have a low Glycaemic Index. It is best to consume legumes and cereals together, such as pasta and beans, rice and peas or rice and lentils.

Cheeses

Cheese is a good source of calcium (plus other minerals like phosphorus) and, during the first 30 years of life, allows bone density to reach its highest genetically programmed level. It also prevents osteoporosis later in life. Care is needed however, as cheeses are generally rich in saturated fats, cholesterol and salt. They are not recommended for people with hypertension. Hard cheeses contain a lot of calcium, vitamins B2, B12 and proteins. Parmesan cheese can supply a woman's daily calcium requirements during pregnancy and breast-feeding. Just 50 g equates to more than 50% of the daily recommended intake. In general, the recommended amount is 2-3 level tablespoons of grated cheese on first courses, vegetables and sauces. Alternatively, you can eat it as a main course, accompanied by a large serving of raw vegetables, 2-3 times a week. It is important to be aware that low-fat cheeses contain a lot of saturated fats.

Chestnuts

Chestnut flour is an excellent food that contains approximately 76% glucides, 6% protein, 4% fat, a trace of sodium, potassium (800 mg per 100 g), iron, calcium, phosphorus and vitamins.

Chicken

Chicken, rabbit and turkey are low in fats and rich in proteins. The names used for chicken change according to the age it reaches: a pullet is about 3-4 months old and weighs about 600 g, a chicken is about 6 months old and weighs about 1 kg, while a hen is a mature bird and weighs about 1.5 kg. A cockerel is a male chicken about 6 months old. A rooster is a male chicken over 2 years old, and too tough for cooking. The hen is a female adult bird dedicated to laying eggs. Its meat is fatty and firm, and ideal for making stock. The capon is a castrated rooster that can weigh up to 2.5 kg

to the presence of an essential oil containing phenol. The variety with the strongest scent is found in southern areas of Europe. The smallest and youngest leaves are collected and dried in the shade. When they have shrivelled up, they are placed in sealable containers to protect them from damp. If properly preserved, oregano can keep its scent for a long time. This herb goes well with meats, vegetables and fish, and is best added after cooking – otherwise it can leave the dish with a bitter taste.

Paprika

Paprika is a Hungarian word that refers to some varieties of sweet pepper. Once the peppers have been thoroughly cleaned inside and out, they are dried, then ground into a powder. This paprika powder is often used in traditional Eastern dishes and other forms of cooking to recreate so-called “gypsy” dishes. In goulash and other meat-based stews, paprika is an essential ingredient. Paprika should never be cooked by itself; it is best used in combination with onion and is a great addition to browned meat and gravy. It stimulates gastric secretions and can cause a burning sensation in the stomach.

Parsnip

Parsnips have been cultivated for at least 2,000 years. They consist of a very tasty yellowish/white root. They have the same consistency as carrots and are richer in carbohydrates and proteins, but have fewer vitamins.

Pasta

White pasta contains fewer fibres, minerals and vitamins than its wholemeal equivalent, but is still a good source of carbohydrate compounds. It has a low-fat content and medium Glycaemic Index (GI) rating. Each type of pasta has its own cooking time, which is usually indicated on the packaging. Pasta must only be cooked until it is “al dente”; overcooking it causes an increase in its GI.

Pears

Pears are rich in organic acids, antioxidants, fibre, minerals (iron and calcium) and vitamins (B1, B2, PP and C). One pear a day provides 16% of your recommended fibre intake and

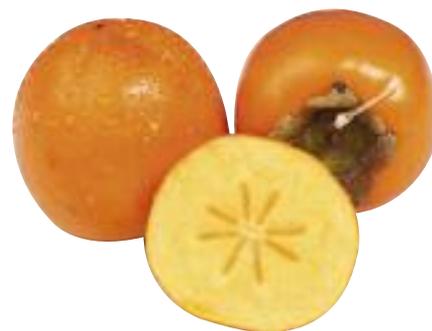
10% of your recommended vitamin C. Pears also help digestion and, when cooked, can combat constipation and keep cholesterol levels low.

Pepper

Pepper comes from a long climbing plant that produces pods, each of which holds about 20 to 40 seeds. Black pepper is the best-known type, but the colours are defined by how they are prepared. Pepper has a distinctive spicy aroma, and the younger the plant is harvested, the spicier it is. The white variety is obtained by steeping black pepper in salt water or pickling lime and then shelling it. This gives it a milder aroma than black pepper. Pepper can cause a significant production of gastric juices, and is therefore not suitable for everyone. It is not recommended for those who suffer from: duodenal ulcers, internal or external haemorrhoids or anal rhagades, hiatus hernia, skin diseases, gastric pyrosis, gastritis, duodenitis, colitis or hypertension. From a culinary point of view, freshly ground black pepper is the healthiest choice.

Persimmons

Originating from China, persimmons are rich in vitamins, mineral salts and sugars – if picked at the right time – and are an excellent source of energy. Perfect for children and sports enthusiasts.



Pheasant

Contains much more fat than other wild birds, so is best avoided.

Pomegranates

Pomegranates are not especially nutritious and contain a lot of sugar and vitamin C. A daily

intake of around 50 ml of pomegranate juice helps prevent the build-up of cholesterol and fats on artery walls.

Pork

Pork contains a little more fat than beef, but is rich in vitamin B, zinc and selenium.

Potatoes

Potatoes are eaten in vast quantities right across Northern Europe, with Belgium having the highest annual consumption at 200 kg per person. Potatoes contain vitamins, vitamin C, potassium, fibres and minerals. New potatoes contain more vitamin C than old ones, and white potatoes have a high Glycaemic Index (GI) rating. To minimise the effect on glycaemia, potatoes are best served with other vegetables that have a low GI.

Prunes

A study has demonstrated that regular intake of prunes reduces LDL cholesterol in the blood. They also have laxative properties.

Pumpkin

Pumpkin is rich in fibre, vitamin A (as with carrots, apricots, tomatoes and peppers) and mineral salts, especially potassium, calcium and phosphorus. It is recommended for the prevention of tumours and as an active restorative against infectious diseases and respiratory infections. In culinary use, pumpkin should not be fried.

Rabbit

A white meat, often thought of as a delicacy, with little fat and a high protein content. It has less cholesterol than a lot of other meats (35-50 mg/100 g), so is recommended for diabetics and people with high blood pressure and hypercholesterolemia. Rabbit meat is rich in mineral salts such as magnesium, potassium, chlorine, sodium and sulphur.

Rice

Like pasta, white rice also contains fewer vitamins, minerals and fibres than the wholegrain variety. Rice has a high Glycaemic

Index rating. We recommend Basmati, wholegrain or parboiled rice.



Rosemary

This shrub grows naturally throughout the Mediterranean region. It has a very strong scent that comes from an essential oil containing camphor, eucalyptus and terpenes. Rosemary is used to add aroma to various dishes, including meats, fish and vegetables. In the 17th century, rosemary was approved by the Hungarian Court after Queen Isabella (who was in her eighties and had become remarkably frail) found a new lease of life thanks to a mix of rosemary, mint and lavender. From then on, rosemary has been known for its therapeutic value, including antiseptic, diuretic, stimulatory and tonic properties. In culinary use, it can be used in whole branches, chopped pines or in powder. Although it has a certain affinity for garlic, it also blends very well with thyme, sage and savory.

Saffron

This spice is noted for adding a distinctive yellow colour to certain dishes such as Milanese risotto, bouillabaisse, fish soup and some cheeses. Only small amounts should be used to avoid a bitter after-taste and to not make the dishes too yellow. As saffron stimulates gastric secretion, it is best avoided by those suffering from inflammation of the gastric system (as is the case with all spices). Saffron is very expensive.

Salami and sausages

These contain a lot of saturated fats and sodium, and have a medium Glycaemic Index (GI) rating.

Salt

Salt is best avoided by those with diabetes and hypertension (hypercholesterolemia and hypertension is an explosive combination for the coronary arteries). Daily sodium intake should be no more than 2 g. Unfortunately, we all tend to consume at least twice that due to high sodium levels in nearly all packaged foods. Therefore, everyone should try to reduce the amount of salt in their diet. Aside from its health risks, it also masks the natural flavour of food, so as an alternative, try using aromatic herbs, lemon juice or vinegar.

Salmon

Salmon is rich in Omega 3 and low in saturated fats. Compared to smoked salmon, the fresh variety contains less salt. Furthermore, freshly caught wild salmon is better than that from a fish farm, as it contains more Omega 3 and fewer potentially harmful contaminants.

Seeds (sunflower, sesame, poppy and pumpkin)

These seeds are rich in minerals, proteins, fibres, polyunsaturated fats, antioxidants and vitamin E. Even though they have a high calorie content, they can be consumed in moderation.

Shellfish

Shellfish contain little fat, and are rich in minerals, vitamins and polyunsaturated fatty acids. They have a high cholesterol content, but in a form that is easily absorbed by the intestine. Avoid cooking shellfish in butter or fatty sauces. Scampi and prawns are high in cholesterol, while crabs contain a lot of Omega 3 and are therefore better for you.

Soya

Soya is very rich in proteins, with the only negative factor being its low methionine content. However, this amino acid is abundant in cereals (bread, pasta etc.), so if soya is consumed along with these, you will get the same benefit as the proteins found in meat,

fish, milk and eggs. The table below lists the protein content found in 1 g of soya and other foods:

Soya	34.9%
Lentils	23.0%
Beef	18%
Beans	18%
Sole	16%
Oats	14%
Egg	13%
Wheat	12.5%
Brown rice	7.4%
Milk	3.5%



The fatty acids in soya beans are mainly unsaturated and very unstable at high temperatures; they are therefore not suitable for cooking. Their carbohydrate content is also high (33.4%), without containing any gluten. Soya has a high content of “noble” mineral salts such as calcium, iron and potassium (although many are lost during processing), not to mention vitamins. Like other pulses (chickpeas, beans, broad beans etc.) soya decreases cholesterol and plays a key role against the onset of arteriosclerosis. Soya can be consumed by everyone.

Spices

For thousands of years, Mediterranean and European societies have associated spices with the Orient. This applies particularly to India, where the hot, spicy aromas that enrich so many dishes come from. These poignant aromas became a status symbol because of their high cost. Doctors recommended them to rich patients to help digestion, and their exotic charm made them even more alluring. Cumin,

turmeric, cinnamon, nutmeg, clove (fresh or powdered), juniper and ginger can all be used in preparing food. Spices should be kept well sealed, otherwise they tend to lose their characteristic aroma.

Spinach

Spinach contains high levels of protein and iron. It is a commonly used ingredient in many dishes (cooked in a little water or simply added to the main pan), or it can be eaten raw. It can be seasoned with oil and vinegar. It also tastes great with a sauce made from anchovies, parsley, finely sliced capers and lemon juice.



Stock cubes

If using stock cubes (meat extract or powdered vegetable), only buy ones that contain no salt, preservatives or colorants – and only use them in moderation. Homemade stocks (see page 95) are definitely safer and healthier.

Stockfish (see codfish)

Strawberries

Strawberries are very rich in vitamin C (more than citrus fruits), and help against arthritis and liver diseases.

String beans

Rich in mineral salts, fibres and vitamins, and with a much lower calorie content than other legumes, string beans are often used in diets to aid slimming.

Sugars

Sugars have a high Glycaemic Index (GI) rating and, unlike complex carbohydrates, are high in calories and are fattening. They therefore

indirectly damage the coronary arteries and are not recommended for diabetics as they are absorbed rapidly and can increase glycaemia. Cane sugar contains neither fats nor fibres and is a simple carbohydrate. Brown sugar contains a small amount of vitamins and minerals. It is better to use a little honey instead of sugar. The WHO has determined that a small amount of sugar (one level teaspoon - 23 kcal) per day can form part of a healthy diet for diabetics, but attention must be paid to the sugar contained in packaged foods, especially snacks, sweets, chocolate bars etc. Sugars also damage the teeth by accelerating decay.

Sweeteners

Nowadays, diabetics of normal weight and metabolic balance are allowed to consume a small amount of sugar, but the use of sweeteners is safer. Saccharine (which has been available for many years) has long been suspected as being carcinogenic and the cause of foetal deformations. The WHO advises against saccharine for pregnant women and infants, and suggests limiting intake to a maximum of five tablets per day. The benefits of saccharine lie in its powerful sweetening effect - it is 500 times more effective than sugar and in its total lack of calories. Aspartame, on the other hand, has the same calorific value as sugar - although it too has a high sweetening effect (200 times greater than sugar), so can be used in very small doses - keeping the calorie content low. Both sweeteners are unstable at high temperatures and therefore cannot be used for baking cakes and biscuits. They are best used in uncooked recipes or with fruit. Do not overdo the use of sweeteners that should be prescribed by the doctor. Fructose is a sugar that is extracted from fruit. It has about the same amount of calories as normal sugar (sucrose) but has a stronger sweetening effect and so less can be used. It is absorbed more slowly by the body and so causes fewer ups and downs in glycaemia. Excessive fructose intake (more than 25g per day) can cause diarrhoea and raise triglyceride levels. Stevia rebaudiana, commonly known as sweetleaf, also deserves a mention. It is a shrub that grows in Paraguay and Southern Brazil. For centuries, its dried