

Low FODMAP Diet

FODMAP stands for **F**ermentable **O**ligo-, **D**i-, **M**ono-saccharides and **P**olyols which are short-chain carbohydrates found in foods. They are poorly absorbed in the small intestine, prone to absorbing water and fermenting in the colon. Removing FODMAP foods can dramatically improve digestive complaints, such as bloating, gas and stomach pain. Embarking on a low FODMAP diet is now a clinically recommended strategy for managing irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

Stage 1: RESTRICTION

This stage involves avoidance of all high-FODMAP foods (see table below). This stage should last no longer than 8 weeks (or as guided by your health care practitioner).

Whilst avoiding FODMAP foods can help ease your symptoms, the number of FODMAP-containing foods is large and together they offer a wide range of nutritional properties essential for human health. Cutting out all FODMAP foods permanently will harm your health in the long run — in particular, your gut health as many FODMAP foods are prebiotic and feed your good bacteria.

Some individuals may notice an improvement in symptoms in the first couple of weeks, others can take longer. Once you have adequate relief of your digestive symptoms you can progress to Stage 2.

Stage 2: REINTRODUCTION

This stage involves systematically reintroducing high-FODMAP foods to:

- 1) To identify which *types* of FODMAPs you tolerate. Few people are sensitive to all of them.
- 2) To establish the *amount* of FODMAPs you can tolerate. This is known as your 'threshold level.'

One specific food is tested for *three days* whilst you *remain on a low FODMAP diet*. You observe how you tolerate this specific food and then remove it again. You then move onto reintroducing another high FODMAP food. You continue this process until you have established which foods you are able to tolerate. It is essential you continue to abstain from other high FODMAP foods during this trial and error phase, even if they have been successfully trialled, as you may not be able to tolerate multiple FODMAP foods together and you would have to start the process again.

Stage 3: PERSONALISATION

Once you have established which foods you are able to tolerate individually, you can begin to incorporate them all into your diet. It is useful to keep a food and symptom diary during this time. Tracking your food intake and if / when any of your previous or new symptoms appear will help you decipher what your threshold level of different FODMAP foods is, enabling you to tailor your FODMAP intake to what suits you.

What if your symptoms don't improve?

The low-FODMAP diet does not work for everyone with IBS. Around 30% of people don't respond to the diet. Fortunately, there are other non-diet-based therapies that may help. Talk to your health care practitioner about alternative options.

FODMAP Food List

	Foods to avoid:	Foods to include:
Fruits	Apples, apricots, blackberries, cherries, figs, lychee, mango, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums, prunes, watermelon. Tinned fruit, dried fruit, fruit juice.	Banana, blueberries, cantaloupe melon, grapefruit, grapes, honeydew melon, kiwi, lemon, lime, mandarin, orange, passionfruit, paw paw, raspberry, strawberry
Vegetables	Artichokes, asparagus, avocado, beetroot, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, chicory, fennel, garlic, leeks, mushrooms, okra, onions, peas, shallots, snow peas, sugar snap peas, sweet corn.	Aubergine, bean sprouts, bok choy, butternut squash, carrot, courgette, cucumber, ginger, green beans, kale, lettuce, olives, parsnip, peppers, potatoes, pumpkin, spinach, sweet potato, tomato, turnips green bit spring onions.

Grains	All gluten-containing grains — wheat, rye, barley, spelt and kamut.	Gluten free bread and crackers e.g., 'Genius' bread, rice cakes, corn cakes. Oats — gluten free certified and in small quantities (avoid 'quick oats'). Amaranth, brown rice, buckwheat, millet, potatoes, quinoa. Rice noodles, buckwheat noodles, brown rice pasta, gluten-free pasta. Gluten-free mueslis and cereals. Gluten-free flours or flour made of the above grains. Polenta, corn.
Legumes	All beans and pulses including lentils, chickpeas, beans and baked beans.	Firm tofu (not silken) is safe to include.
Nuts and seeds	Pistachios and cashew nuts. Coconut oil and milk are LOW fodmap but larger servings of coconut water and / or flesh are high and should be avoided.	All other nuts and seeds are safe to include but stick to smaller portion size; almonds, macadamia, pine nuts, walnuts, pumpkin seeds.
Meat and fish	Processed foods containing additives from the avoid column e.g., avoid breadcrumbs, marinades and sauces / gravies that may be high in FODMAPs.	All lean meat and fish safe to include.
Dairy and eggs	All dairy products including milk, yoghurt, cheese and ice cream.	Rice milk, eggs, lacto-free dairy products.
Sweeteners	Fructose, high fructose corn syrup, agave syrup /	Genuine maple syrup, sugar (in moderation).

	nectar, honey, sorbitol, mannitol, xylitol, maltitol, isomalt and other sweeteners ending in -'ol'.	
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Herbs and spices

Following a low FODMAP diet can feel very restrictive at first and it is easy for mealtimes to suddenly feel uninspiring. Here is a list of low FODMAP herbs and spices that can help add flavour and culinary flare back into your foods.

- **Mexican:** Coriander, cumin, paprika, cinnamon, chilli, black pepper, cloves.
- **French:** Thyme, nutmeg, rosemary, sage, tarragon, black pepper, saffron, parsley.
- **Italian:** Parsley, basil, bay leaves, sage, rosemary.
- **Asian:** Asian chives, chilli, coriander, fenugreek, lemongrass, mint, pandan leaves, Thai basil, cardamom, cloves, cumin, fennel seeds, star anise, turmeric, five spice, sesame seeds, cinnamon, ginger, galangal, kaffir lime leaves.
- **Indian / Sri Lankan:** Fennel seeds, asafoetida, chilli, cardamom, black pepper, cumin, capers, bay leaves, cinnamon, cloves, coriander, curry leaves, curry powder, fenugreek, goraka, ginger, mint, mustard seeds, nutmeg, poppy seeds, saffron, sesame seeds, tamarind, turmeric, basil, lemongrass, rampa leaves.
- **Middle Eastern:** Bay leaves, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, cumin, ginger, coriander seed, allspice, mint, fenugreek, parsley, sesame seeds, thyme, nutmeg, chilli.
- **Moroccan:** Cinnamon, turmeric, ginger, black pepper, paprika, sesame seeds, coriander, saffron, cloves, fennel, fenugreek, mint, parsley, coriander.
- **Spanish:** Saffron, paprika, bay leaf, rosemary, parsley, thyme, chilli.