



Anti-Inflammatory Diet: Shopping Tips

Here are some suggestions to take with you on your next shopping trip. All of these foods have potential anti-inflammatory properties and may help you in planning an anti-inflammatory diet. Don't limit yourself to just these foods as there are many other delicious anti-inflammatory foods which are not on this list.

VEGETABLES

- **Broccoli:** Broccoli and other cruciferous vegetables (including cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, turnip greens and kale) are rich in antioxidants, calcium, vitamin E, and protein.
- **Beans:** A great source of protein, fiber, and minerals. There are many delicious beans including Black beans, red (Kidney) beans, pinto beans, navy beans, Jacob's Cattle beans, and anasazi beans. Beans have a mild, slightly sweet flavor and a mealy texture. Beans need to be cooked before they are eaten.
- **Dark leafy greens:** Lightly cooked dark leafy greens (spinach, collard greens, kale, Swiss chard) are all rich in flavonoids and carotenoids with both antioxidant and anti-inflammatory activity. Swiss chard is also high in dietary fiber, vitamins K, C, and E, calcium, protein, thiamine, niacin and folic acid. Kale is high in B vitamins, minerals, vitamins C, A, and K, fiber and protein. Spinach is high in niacin, zinc, fiber, and contains B vitamins, vitamin A, E, and C, and minerals. Collard greens have thiamin, niacin, potassium vitamin A, C and E and minerals. All dark leafy greens contain about 1 g of protein for each ounce of raw vegetable. Each of these leafy greens is like a medicine chest in a leaf.
- **Squashes and sweet potato:** These vegetables are low in fat and high in fiber, carotenoids, vitamin A and C and trace minerals. These hearty vegetables can be a delicious and satisfying substitute for meat.

FRUIT

- **Apples:** An apple a day really may keep the doctor away! Apples are a great source of vitamin C and fiber and apples with red skins provide anthocyanidins which are potent anti-inflammatory compounds. Be sure to buy organic apples as pesticides are easily soaked up into the apple through its relatively thin skin.
- **Avocados:** Avocados are unique as a fruit because they contain a high amount of monounsaturated fat (about 25g per avocado). Monounsaturated fat is an important anti-inflammatory fat. Avocados also provide fiber (typically about 13g per avocado) as well as protein (usually 4g per avocado).
- **Berries:** Any bright-colored berry would be perfect. Berries such as raspberries, blackberries, and others provide a significant dose of natural antioxidants, in the form of plant-based pigments (anthocyanins). Berries are also good sources of vitamin C and fiber. They can be fresh, frozen, or dried, but ideally should be organic. Berries are often among the "dirty dozen" (see next page) of fruits and veggies that should only be eaten in organic form, as they tend to trap pesticides.
- **Oranges:** Citrus fruits are very high in antioxidants, especially vitamin C (citric acid). In addition, oranges contain beta-carotene, zeaxanthins, flavonoids, and lycopene.

THE “DIRTY DOZEN”

- Check out the Environmental Working Group (EWG) Dirty Dozen list:

[ewg.org/foodnews/dirty-dozen.php](https://www.ewg.org/foodnews/dirty-dozen.php)

This list is updated each year and informs you about the “dirty dozen”, or top 12 most pesticide-concentrated produce. These fruits and vegetables are best purchased as organic.

- The EWG also provides the “clean fifteen” list:

[ewg.org/foodnews/clean-fifteen.php](https://www.ewg.org/foodnews/clean-fifteen.php)

These fruits and vegetables carry very low levels of pesticides and it’s fine to purchase these as non-organic fruit and vegetables.

Keep in mind that if you want to avoid genetically modified produce, you need to purchase organic fruits and vegetables.

PROTEINS

- **Tofu:** For people who are not allergic or intolerant to soy foods, tofu is a low inflammatory protein choice. In moderation, soy protein is associated with a lower risk of prostate cancer, and may reduce breast cancer risk if routinely eaten during adolescence. As a natural and complete protein, tofu beats protein powders that contain high concentrations of “isolated soy protein.” Organic tofu is preferable. Firm or soft tofu are equally good. Many neighborhood markets and health food stores stock tofu burgers which are a convenient and tasty source of soy protein.
- **Wild-caught fish deep sea fish:** Salmon is a good protein choice, especially if wild Alaskan salmon (i.e., sockeye) is selected. Farm-raised salmon virtually eliminates the “omega-3 advantage” of the fish. Salmon is an excellent source of omega-3 fats, and is also readily available (canned wild salmon is prevalent).

- **Sardines:** Sardines are a superb choice for anti-inflammatory omega-3 fats. In addition, herring and black cod (sablefish) are terrific choices in seafood. Sardines contain about 1–1.7 grams of omega-3 fats per serving. They are also a good choice because they are small and lower on the food chain; they do not accumulate the toxins found in larger fatty fish (e.g., mercury, PCB’s, and lead).

DAIRY & DAIRY ALTERNATIVES

- **Soymilk:** Soymilk contains isoflavones that are potent antioxidants and may even be protective against certain cancers. Also, soymilk is a whole soy food, which is preferable to fractionated foods containing isolated soy protein powder and imitation meats made with soy isolate. Try to find a soymilk product without carageenan, a thickening agent has been associated with gastrointestinal tract inflammation.
- **Nut and grain milks:** Milk made from rice, oat, hemp, almond, and cashew are excellent substitutes for cow’s milk. These milks provide fiber, protein and essential fats. Experiment to find the milk that tastes best to you!
- **Yogurt:** Yogurt is a good choice, but perhaps not for the reason that you think. While yogurt is a good source of protein, it is the probiotic content of yogurt that provides health benefits. These probiotics reduce inflammation throughout the body and help to maintain optimal immunity. Avoid fruit-sweetened yogurts as these yogurts contain significant sugar. Plain cultured yogurt is best and Greek-style yogurt provides the most protein. Other fermented foods that are also a source of friendly bacteria include buttermilk, kefir and sauerkraut.

