

The 25 Lowest-Carb Vegetables

It's not always easy to compare apples to oranges when it comes to carbs. Fruits and vegetables come in all shapes and sizes, and while it might seem like one is a lower-carb choice than another, it may just seem that way because of size and weight differences. We leveled the playing field for you here, so you can compare apples to apples...so to speak!

Note: To help you visualize a rough idea of what amounts to a 50 gram portion, here are some examples: 10 grapes, 1/3 of a medium sized peach, 1/2 cup chopped celery, or 2 extra long spears of asparagus.

#1 is ARUGULA!

It contains 2g of carbs in a 50-gram portion. One cup of arugula contains 1g of carbs.

Arugula is rich in phytonutrients, which may reduce the risk of several kinds of cancers, including breast, stomach, and colon.

Note: To help you visualize a 50-gram portion, here are some examples: 10 grapes, 1/3 of a medium sized peach, 1/2 cup chopped celery, 35 blueberries, or 2 extra-long spears of asparagus.

#2 is CUCUMBER!

It contains 1g of carbs in a 50-gram portion. One-half cup of sliced cucumber contains 2g of carbs.

The flesh of a cucumber is mostly water but also contains vitamin C and caffeic acid, both of which soothe skin irritations and reduce swelling. The skin is rich in fiber, magnesium, and potassium — a combination that may help lower blood pressure.

#3 is BROCCOLI RAAB!

It contains 1g of carbs in a 50-gram portion. One-half bunch of cooked broccoli raab contains 7g of carbs.

This immune-boosting vegetable is a rich source of lutein and zeaxanthin, which may help prevent macular degeneration. It's also a great source of calcium, potassium, vitamin C, and bone-building vitamin K.

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#4 is ICEBERG LETTUCE!

It contains 2g of carbs in a 50-gram portion. One cup of shredded iceberg lettuce contains 2g of carbs.

Iceberg lettuce is an excellent source of potassium, which has been shown to lower blood pressure, and manganese, which is essential for bone health and may help regulate blood sugar levels. It is also a good source of iron, calcium, magnesium, and phosphorus.

#5 is CELERY!

It contains 2g of carbs in a 50-gram portion. Two medium stalks of celery contains 2.5g of carbs.

Celery is an excellent source of vitamin C. It is also rich with nutrients such as phthalides, which may lower cholesterol and blood pressure, and coumarins, which may protect against some forms of cancer by preventing damage from free radicals.

#6 is WHITE MUSHROOMS!

They contain 2g of carbs in a 50-gram portion. One-half cup of raw sliced white mushrooms contains 2g of carbs.

Mushrooms are extremely dense with nutrients, including selenium, a trace mineral that may help fight cancer. They are also rich in antioxidant and anti-inflammatory nutrients, and may help prevent cardiovascular disease.

#7 is RADISHES!

They contain 2g of carbs in a 50-gram portion. One-half cup of sliced raw radishes contains 2g of carbs.

Radishes are an excellent source of vitamin C and calcium. Like other cruciferous veggies, they are thought to have cancer fighting properties, and have been used as medicinal food for liver disorders.

#8 is TURNIPS!

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They contain 2g of carbs in a 50-gram portion. One-half cup of cooked turnips contains 4g of carbs.

Turnips are especially high in cancer-fighting glucosinolates. Turnip greens are rich in antioxidants, including vitamins C and E, beta-carotene, and manganese. They are also a good source of vitamin K and omega-3 fatty acids, both of which have anti-inflammatory properties.

#9 is ROMAINE LETTUCE!

It contains 2g of carbs in a 50-gram portion. One cup of shredded romaine lettuce contains 1.5g of carbs.

Romaine lettuce is an excellent source of vitamin C and beta-carotene, which work together to prevent the oxidization of cholesterol. It is also rich in potassium, which has been shown to lower blood pressure. The makes Romaine a heart-healthy vegetable.

#10 is ASPARAGUS!

It contains 2g of carbs in a 50-gram portion. One-half cup of cooked asparagus contains 3.5g of carbs.

Asparagus is an excellent source of anti-inflammatory phytonutrients and a wide variety of antioxidant nutrients, including vitamin C, beta-carotene, zinc, manganese, and selenium. It may help reduce the risk of heart disease and regulate blood sugar because it is rich in fiber and B vitamins, which play a key role in the metabolism of sugar and starches.

#11 is GREEN PEPPER!

It contains 2g of carbs in a 50-gram portion. One-half cup of sliced green peppers contains 2g of carbs.

Green peppers are a great source of vitamins C and A, and vitamin K, which is essential for bone health. The folic acid found in green peppers can reduce levels of homocysteine, an amino acid that damages blood vessels and increases the risk of heart attack and stroke.

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#12 is OKRA!

It contains 2g of carbs in a 50-gram portion. One-half cup of cooked sliced okra contains 3.5g of carbs.

Okra contains glutathione, which is necessary for immune system support. It is also high in protein and fiber — one cup provides 4 grams of fiber.

#13 is CAULIFLOWER!

It contains 3g of carbs in a 50-gram portion. One cup of cooked cauliflower contains 5g of carbs.

Cauliflower is a potent cancer fighter. It provides special nutrients support to the body's detox, antioxidant, and inflammatory systems — all of which are connected to cancer development. With 12 grams of fiber in every 100 calories, cauliflower is also great for digestive health.

#14 is YELLOW PEPPER!

It contains 3g of carbs in a 50-gram portion. One-half cup of sliced yellow pepper contains 3g of carbs.

Yellow peppers are a good source of vitamins C and A, two powerful antioxidants, and vitamin K. It is rich in folic acid, which helps lower levels of homocysteine in the body. Homocysteine can contribute to heart disease, stroke, dementia, and peripheral vascular disease.

#15 is CABBAGE!

It contains 3g of carbs in a 50-gram portion. One cup cooked shredded cabbage contains 8.5g of carbs.

Cabbage is rich in antioxidants, anti-inflammatory nutrients, and glucosinolates, which makes it a potent cancer fighter. Red and purple cabbage contain anthocyanins — antioxidants known as powerful weapons against cardiovascular disease.

#16 is RED BELL PEPPER!

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It contains 3g of carbs in a 50-gram portion. One-half cup of sliced red pepper contains 3g of carbs.

Red bell peppers are a good source of vitamins C and A, two powerful antioxidants, as well as vitamin K, which is necessary for bone health. They are also rich in B6 and folic acid, which may reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.

#17 is BROCCOLI!

It contains 4g of carbs in a 50-gram portion. One cup of cooked chopped broccoli contains 11g of carbs.

Broccoli is a great source of a family of anti-cancer phytochemicals known as isothiocyanates, which work by neutralizing carcinogens. It is unusually high in vitamins K and A. The anti-inflammatory properties found in broccoli help to reduce cardiovascular risks. Broccoli is also good for digestive health due to its fiber content.

#18 is SPINACH!

It contains 4g of carbs in a 50-gram portion. One-half cup of cooked spinach contains 3.5g of carbs.

Spinach is one of the best sources of vitamin K, which helps build strong bones. It contains more than a dozen flavonoid compounds that function as anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer agents. It is a good source of antioxidants that reduce problems related to oxidative stress, such as high blood pressure. Spinach also contains lutein and zeaxanthin, which protect against eye disease.

#19 is BEETS!

They contain 4g of carbs in a 50-gram portion. One-half cup of sliced canned beets contain 12.5g of carbs.

Beets get their color from betacyanin, which may help prevent cancer. They are a good source of betanine and folate, which reduce homocysteine levels. Homocysteine can damage blood vessels and contribute to heart disease, stroke, dementia, and peripheral vascular disease.

#20 is GREEN BEANS!

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The 25 Lowest-Carb Vegetables, Continued

They contain 4g of carbs in a 50-gram portion. One-half cup of cooked green beans contains 5g of carbs.

Green beans are a good source of folate, a B vitamin that lowers levels of homocysteine levels, an amino acid that can increase your risk of heart attack, stroke, and blood clots. Green beans are also rich in manganese, a trace mineral essential for growth, reproduction, wound healing, peak brain function, and proper metabolism of sugars, insulin, and cholesterol.

#21 is CARROTS!

They contain 5g of carbs in a 50-gram portion. One-half cup of carrots contains 6g of carbs.

Carrots are an excellent source of antioxidant compounds and the richest vegetable source of pro-vitamin A carotenes. These help protect against cardiovascular disease and cancer, and promote good vision. Carrots are rich in carotenoids, antioxidants that may be beneficial to blood sugar regulation and are inversely associated with insulin resistance and high blood sugar.

#22 is KALE!

It contains 5g of carbs in a 50-gram portion. One-half cup chopped cooked kale contains 4g of carbs.

Kale is rich in antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and anti-cancer nutrients. It contains powerful phytochemicals, such as indoles, which have been found to protect against some forms of cancer. Kale is also loaded with calcium, iron, beta-carotene, vitamins A, C, and K, as well as lutein and zeaxanthin, which may help prevent macular degeneration.

#23 is SUGAR SNAP PEAS!

They contain 5g of carbs in a 50-gram portion. One-half cup of whole raw sugar snap peas contains 1g of carbs.

Snap peas are rich in antioxidants, such as vitamin C, vitamin E, and zinc, and anti-inflammatory nutrients, such as omega-3 fatty acids. This combination of antioxidants and anti-inflammatory compounds may reduce the risk of inflammatory diseases, including diabetes.

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#24 is ONIONS!

They contain 7g of carbs in a 50-gram portion. One-half cup of cooked onion contains 11g of carbs.

Onions provide many anti-inflammatory benefits and may be protective against some forms of cancer. They are rich in sulfur compounds, which are responsible for many of their health benefits. These compounds can help lower cholesterol and triglyceride levels, which makes onions heart-healthy vegetables.

#25 is CORN!

It contains 10g of carbs in a 50-gram portion. One medium ear of corn contains 26g of carbs. (Okay, that's not really low carb at all, but that's why it's number-25!)

Corn is a good source of folate, which helps to lower levels of homocysteine. It is also rich in beta-cryptoxanthin, which may lower the risk of developing lung cancer. In addition, corn contains the B vitamin pantothenic acid, which is necessary for carb, protein, and lipid metabolism.

The nutrition information in this slideshow is adapted from The George Mateljan Foundation's "World's Healthiest Foods" website (www.whfoods.com).

Reviewed by Susan Weiner, RD, MS, CDE, CDN. 4/12 