

Best Carb Sources & Closing the Gap

Better carb choices, plus how to fix the simple carbs you already eat

Carbs aren't the problem. The best sources come with fibre, micronutrients and slower digestion, which means steadier energy and better fullness. But most of us also eat plenty of simple carbs like white rice, idli, dosa and poha every day, and they're low in fibre and protein. This guide lists the best carb sources (with South Indian options) and shows how to close the fibre and protein gap in the simple carbs you already eat.

Best Carb Sources

Fibre-rich, slow-digesting carbs to build most meals around

CARB SOURCE	WHY IT'S A GOOD CARB	HOW TO INCLUDE IT
Oats	High in fibre (beta-glucan), digests slowly and keeps you full for hours.	Porridge, overnight oats, or blended into batter for idli and dosa.
Whole Wheat Roti (Atta)	Far more fibre than refined flour, with steadier energy release.	Swap maida-based rotis, parathas and breads for whole wheat versions.
Brown Rice	Keeps the fibre-rich bran that white rice loses in polishing.	Replace white rice at lunch, or mix half and half to ease the switch.
Quinoa	A carb source that also brings protein and fibre together.	Use as a rice substitute or in salads and pulao.
Potato (Boiled, Cooled)	Cooling boiled potato forms resistant starch, which acts like fibre and is filling.	Boil, cool and use in salads or sabzi instead of frying.
Whole Fruits (Apple, Banana, Guava)	Natural carbs packaged with fibre, water and micronutrients.	Have as a snack or pre-workout instead of juice or biscuits.

South Indian Friendly Carbs

Familiar, local options that fit right into everyday meals

CARB SOURCE	WHY IT'S A GOOD CARB	HOW TO INCLUDE IT
Ragi (Finger Millet)	Rich in fibre and calcium, and slow-digesting.	Ragi mudde, ragi dosa, ragi roti or ragi malt.
Jowar (Jolada Rotti)	Gluten-free, high in fibre and a decent protein contributor.	Jolada rotti with sabzi, dal or chutney pudi.
Foxtail / Little Millet (Navane / Samai)	More fibre than polished rice and gentler on blood sugar.	Cook like rice, or use for upma, pongal and khichdi.
Red / Matta Rice	Less processed than polished white rice, so it retains more fibre.	Use for regular meals with sambar, rasam or fish curry.
Sweet Potato (Genasu)	Fibre-rich, with vitamin A, and a filling carb for its calories.	Boil or roast as a pre-workout snack or side.
Raw Banana (Bale Kai)	Contains resistant starch that supports gut health and fullness.	Use in palya, curries or lightly steamed.
Pesarattu / Moong Dosa	Carbs and protein in the same dish, since it is made from whole green gram.	Serve with ginger chutney and a vegetable side.

Closing the Fibre & Protein Gap

Keep the simple carbs you enjoy, but build them out

SIMPLE CARB	WHAT'S MISSING	HOW TO CLOSE THE GAP
White Rice	Low in fibre and protein	Eat dal and sabzi on the same plate, add sprouts or a salad on the side, and mix in millets or a little brown rice. Serve with curd, egg or chicken.
Idli	Mostly starch, little fibre, modest protein	Load the sambar with vegetables and dal, add a boiled egg or paneer bhurji on the side, and mix oats or ragi into the batter.
Plain Dosa	Low in protein and fibre	Use moong, ragi or adai batter, stuff with paneer or egg, and pair with sambar and a roasted chana or peanut chutney.
Poha	Low in protein and fibre	Add peanuts, sprouts, vegetables and paneer, and have it with a bowl of curd.
Rava Upma	Refined semolina, low in fibre	Pack it with vegetables, peanuts and moong dal, or switch to a millet or oats version. Add a boiled egg alongside.
White Bread / Toast	Refined, very low in fibre and protein	Choose whole wheat or multigrain, then top with egg, paneer, peanut butter or sprouts, and add tomato and cucumber.

Quick Rules For Every Carb Meal

Simple habits that work with any carb source

RULE	WHY IT WORKS
Start the meal with protein and veggies	Eating these first slows how fast the carbs hit your blood and keeps you fuller.
Add a protein to every carb	Egg, curd, dal, paneer, chicken, fish or soya. Aim for a palm-sized portion per meal.
Add a fibre topper	A spoon of chia or flax, a bowl of sprouts, or a side salad adds fibre for very few calories.
Swap part, not all	Replacing half of the white rice with millets is easier to stick to than switching overnight.
Watch portions, not just the food	Even the best carbs add up. Size the portion to your activity level and goal.

Note: This guide is for general education, not a prescribed diet plan. Carb needs vary with bodyweight, activity level and health conditions, so consult a coach or dietitian for numbers specific to you.