

Guide to Calcium Rich Foods

Why It Matters, Top Food Sources, and How to Absorb It Better

Calcium supports far more than bones — it's essential for muscle contraction, nerve signalling, and blood clotting. Since your body can't produce calcium on its own, consistent daily intake through food matters, especially as bone density naturally declines with age. This guide covers top sources across dairy, seeds & nuts, and vegetables & grains, along with how much you need and tips to absorb it better.

Colour Key

Dairy	Seeds & Nuts	Vegetables & Grains
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Top Calcium-Rich Dairy

Food	Calcium / 100g	Note
1. Cheese (Cheddar)	~700 mg/100g	One of the most concentrated calcium sources, though best used in moderation given its fat content.
2. Paneer	~208 mg/100g	A vegetarian-friendly staple that works well in curries or grilled as a snack.
3. Curd (Yogurt)	~121 mg/100g	Also provides probiotics, supporting gut health alongside calcium.
4. Milk	~120 mg/100ml	A simple daily source, plain or added to smoothies and coffee.
5. Buttermilk (Chaas)	~40 mg/100ml	A lighter option, useful as a refreshing daily addition, especially post-meal.

Top Calcium-Rich Seeds & Nuts

Food	Calcium / 100g	Note
1. Sesame Seeds (Til)	~975 mg/100g	One of the richest calcium sources of any food, dairy included.
2. Chia Seeds	~631 mg/100g	Best soaked before eating; also a strong fibre source.
3. Almonds	~269 mg/100g	A convenient snack-sized source; best soaked overnight.
4. Flax Seeds	~255 mg/100g	Best consumed ground for better absorption of all its nutrients.
5. Pistachios	~105 mg/100g	A tasty snack option that also contributes protein and healthy fats.

Top Calcium-Rich Vegetables & Grains

Food	Calcium / 100g	Note
1. Ragi (Finger Millet)	~344 mg/100g	One of the richest calcium sources among grains; a South Indian staple.
2. Amaranth Leaves (Chaulai)	~215 mg/100g	A traditional leafy green, excellent cooked into a simple stir-fry.
3. Moringa (Drumstick) Leaves	~185 mg/100g	Also rich in iron and vitamin C, a well-rounded traditional green.
4. Fenugreek Leaves (Methi)	~176 mg/100g	Adds calcium along with a distinctive flavour to parathas and sabzis.
5. Spinach (Palak)	~99 mg/100g	Contains calcium, though its oxalates can reduce absorption somewhat — still a useful contributor.

■ How Much Calcium Do You Need?

- Most adults need roughly 1000mg a day, covered by a combination of dairy, seeds, and leafy greens.
- Women over 50 and men over 70 generally need more, around 1200mg a day, as bone density naturally declines with age.
- Calcium is absorbed better in smaller amounts spread across the day rather than one large dose at once.

■ Getting the Most Out of It

- Pair calcium-rich foods with vitamin D (sunlight exposure or fortified foods) — vitamin D is essential for your body to actually absorb calcium.
- Limit excess caffeine and very high sodium intake, both of which can increase how much calcium your body excretes.
- Spinach and some leafy greens contain oxalates, which can reduce calcium absorption slightly — they're still worth eating, just don't rely on them alone.
- Include weight-bearing exercise (walking, strength training) alongside calcium intake, since bones respond to both together.

Note: Calcium values are approximate averages and can vary by variety, preparation, and brand. This guide is for general education, not medical or dietary prescription — consult a doctor or dietitian for advice specific to your needs, especially before considering supplementation.