

Dietary Sources of Iron

The iron found in meats, fish, and poultry is contained in a molecule called heme which is easily absorbed by the body. The iron in plant sources is nonheme iron and is not as easily absorbed .

Foods with Heme Iron

Food	Serving	Iron (mg)
Clams, canned, drained solids	85 g (3 oz)	23.8
Turkey, giblets, cooked,	145 g (1 cup)	11.18
Chicken, broilers or fryers, giblets, cooked, simmered	145 g (1 cup)	10.21
Duck, domesticated, meat only, cooked, roasted	221g (1/2 duck)	5.97
Beef, chuck, blade roast, separable lean and fat, trimmed to 1/8" fat,	85 g (3 oz)	2.62
Turkey, all classes, meat only, cooked, roasted	140 g (1 cup)	2.49
Fish, sardine, Atlantic, canned in oil, drained solids with bone	85 g (3 oz)	2.48
Lamb, domestic, shoulder, arm, separable lean only, trimmed to 1/4"	85 g (3 oz)	2.30
Beef, ground, 85% lean meat / 15% fat, patty, cooked, broiled	85 g (3 oz)	2.21
Shrimp, canned	85 g (3 oz)	1.81
Chicken, broilers or fryers, breast, meat and skin, cooked, fried, batter	140 g (1/2 breast)	1.75
Lamb, domestic, leg, whole (shank and sirloin), roasted	85 g (3 oz)	1.68
Pork, fresh, shoulder, arm picnic, separable lean only, cooked, braised	85 g (3 oz)	1.66
Beef, top sirloin, all grades, broiled	85 g (3 oz)	1.59
Tuna, light, canned in water, drained solids	85 g (3 oz)	1.30

Try to avoid eating foods that block absorption of iron from plant foods such as tea, coffee, and wines. The absorption of iron from plant foods is improved by the presence in a meal of foods high in vitamin C (ascorbic acid). Good sources of vitamin C include guava, red and green bell peppers, kiwi fruit, oranges, grapefruit, strawberries, Brussels sprouts, cantaloupe, kohlrabi, broccoli, sweet potato, and tomatoes .

Foods with Non-Heme Iron

Food	Serving	Iron (mg)
Fortified cereals ready-to-eat Kellogg's Product 19 General Mills Total	30 g (1 cup)	18.00
Rice, white, long-grain, parboiled, enriched, dry	185 (1 cup)	9.73
Soybeans, mature cooked, boiled, without salt	172 g (1 cup)	8.84
Lentils, mature seeds, cooked, boiled, without salt	198 g (1 cup)	6.59
Spinach, cooked	180 g (1 cup)	6.43
Lima beans, large, mature seeds, cooked, boiled, without salt	188 g (1 cup)	4.49
Refried beans, canned, traditional style	252 g (1 cup)	4.21
Bulgar, dry	140 g (1 cup)	3.44
Tomatoes, red, ripe, canned, stewed	255 g (1 cup)	3.39
Cherries, sour, red, canned, water pack, solids and liquids	244 g (1 cup)	3.34
Chickpeas (garbanzo beans, bengal gram), mature seeds, canned	240 g (1 cup)	3.24
Prune juice, canned	256 g (1 cup)	3.02
Raisins, seedless	145 g (1 cup)	2.73
Mushrooms, cooked, boiled, drained, without salt	156 g (1 cup)	2.71
Sweet potato, canned	255 g (1 cup)	2.27

Source: USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 21) Content of Selected Foods per Common Measure, Iron, Fe
<http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/Data/SR21/nutrlist/sr21w303.pdf>
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