



## IRON

### Best Sources Non-Haem Iron

Amount sometimes given in mg per 100g in brackets:

**Grains:** Brown rice (9.3), millet (6.8), barley (6), buckwheat (4.9); **Pulses:** Green lentils (11.1), red lentils (7.6), black eyed beans and cow peas (7.6), Haricot beans (6.7); **Nuts and Seeds:** Sesame seeds(10.4), pumpkin seeds (11.2), sunflower seeds (6.4), cashew nuts (6.2), pine nuts (5.6); **Temperate Fruits:** Raisin (3.8), prune (2.9), blackcurrant (3.6), loganberry (1.4); **Tropical Fruit:** Dried fig (3.9), date (3.0), passion fruit (1.3); **Vegetables:** Parsley (6.2), jew's ear mushroom (5.1), watercress (2.2), oyster mushroom (1.9), shitake(1.7), broccoli (1.7), kale (1.7), chard (1.8), mustard and cress (1.0); **Sea Vegetables:** Hijiki, kelp (2.9), Irish moss (8.9), wakame.

NOTE: Haem Iron (in seafood, fish and chicken) has 10 x absorption and availability of non-haem iron. Of the vegetarian sources of iron – dried fruit is thought to be amongst the best by dieticians.

**Requirements for Best Iron Absorption:** Vitamin A, vitamin C, cysteine, HCl (proper stomach acid levels).

### Antagonists to Iron Absorption<sup>1</sup>:

- Stimulants: Tea (caffeine and tannic acid), coffee and alcohol.
- Phytates<sup>2</sup>: Soya, wheat (pasta, bread, bulgar wheat, cous cous), pulses, nuts.
- Polyphenols.
- Calcium.

### Contra -indications

Iron is needed for thyroxin manufacture and can in fact enhance thyroid function but should be taken away form thyroxin medication, to which it binds, if supplementing.

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1. Heavy menstrual bleeding can lead to low iron status.

2. Phytates are beneficial in balancing blood sugar by lowering glycaemic index of foods and valued for cancer prevention thought to be due to iron binding capacity, as iron is a potent oxidant as well as IP6 (Inositol 6 phosphate) content.