

Which foods are acidic? ^[1]

DEAR ALICE,

PLEASE LET ME KNOW WHICH FOODS HAVE ACID IN THEM, AS I CANNOT EAT ACID FOODS. THANKYOU.

Answer

Dear Reader,

Contrary to popular belief, eating acidic foods will not cause one's stomach, blood, or entire body to become more acidic. In fact, during the process of digestion, the stomach secretes hydrochloric acid (HCl), a super-duper acidic substance that causes its contents to become acidic. Digestive enzymes, which begin their work in the stomach, require such an environment to function properly.

The pH scale is a ranking of acidity. The "p" stands for potenz, meaning potential to be, and the "H" is for hydrogen. On this scale, a 7.0 measures neutral — neither acidic nor alkaline. Water is a 7.0. Anything measuring a pH of 6.9 or below is considered an acid; anything 7.1 and above is considered an alkali or base.

Generally, fruits are the most acidic foods:

pH	Fruits
2 - 3	lemon juice, vinegar
3 - 4	apples, blueberries, cherries, grapes, grapefruit, nectarines, peaches, pears, pineapple, plums, raspberries
4 - 5	bananas
6	melons

Vegetables range from 4 - 6.8. The more acidic vegetables include:

- escarole
- pimentos
- tomatoes
- any vegetables processed with vinegar, such as canned artichokes, canned beets, pickles, and sauerkraut

It may surprise you to know that beans, breakfast cereals, breads, milk products, and some fish also fall on the acidic side of the pH scale. You can find a detailed list of foods and their pH values on the [Center for Food Safety and Nutrition web site](#) [2] of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Gastric juice — the digestive liquids in your stomach — has a pH of 2.0, which is very, very acidic. The pH of hydrochloric acid is between 0.1 and 1.0 — probably the most acidic substance known to people. Eating acidic foods can't cause the stomach to become more acidic. It's already more acidic than the foods you may be eating. Think of it as being similar to throwing a bucket of salt water into the ocean, not having much of an effect.

If you have gastro-esophageal reflux disease (GERD), more commonly known as acid reflux, your health care provider may have advised you to stay away from acidic foods. That may be because when the contents of your stomach come into contact with your esophagus, highly acidic foods may make the discomfort from the burning sensation more intense. Your esophagus lacks the protective lining that your stomach has against acidic substances.

Alice!

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