

Top 10 Probiotic Rich Foods and Recipes with Healing Benefits for your Body

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Say hello to our second brain – our gut! Surprised much? You really needn't be, as our gut has far greater impact on our body than we give it credit for. More and more research has substantiated the fact that we have more bacteria in our body than cells. So that makes us more of a bug than a human!



But even if you are rolling your eyes in disbelief, hear us out! The trillions of bacteria residing in our gut play a great many roles in our body and impact our overall health, as they regulate inflammation and immunity. But instead of nourishing it, all we do is affect our gut health adversely by the overuse of antacids, birth control pills, environmental pills, steroids, and the works, damaging the very system that protects and sustains our bodies, namely our microbiome.

Here is where a probiotic comes in! A probiotic food can fix your gut health in more ways than one. Care to know how? We will tell you how!

What are Probiotics?

Probiotics are bacteria that line your digestive system and enhance your body's ability to absorb the nutrients from the food you eat, and also helps stave off infections.

Earlier our body used to get enough probiotics as people ate fresh foods from good soil. People also ate more fermented foods to keep their foods from spoiling.



Now, all we do is refrigerate our foods, and support dangerous agricultural practices. Most of our foods are soaked in chlorine. So today we get to eat foods full of antibiotics which kill off the good bacteria, causing an imbalance in the gut, leading to chronic health conditions.

So, the secret is out, all you have to do is balance your gut bacteria, which is the key to health and well-being.

Benefits of Probiotics on your Health

The incredible benefits of probiotics are not limited to just promoting good digestion, here's what else it can do:



- It boosts the immune system
- Improves digestion
- Increases energy because of the production of B12
- Helps experience better health

- Healthy skin and improves conditions such as improve eczema and psoriasis
- Reduces cold and flu
- Heals leaky gut syndrome and inflammatory bowel disease
- Aids in weight loss

Top 7 Probiotic Killers

Most people, and that includes children, need a healthy dose of probiotics due to the overuse of prescription medications, especially antibiotics. We are slowly killing our beneficial bacteria, thanks or rather no thanks, to the following:

- Medicines, especially antibiotics
- Sugar
- Tap water
- Gluten
- GMO foods
- Stress
- Chemicals



To maintain your gut flora balance, you need to avoid the foods that kill off good bacteria. If they're not addressed, your gut micro-organisms become imbalanced, and your system can become a thriving field for bad bacteria, parasites, yeast, viruses, and fungi.

The only way you can heal your gut bacteria is by including [probiotic-rich foods in your diet](#). Here are some delicious and healthy foods which you can add to your daily diet.

Probiotic Rich foods – A must have!

Your gut is a receptacle of both beneficial and harmful bacteria. Doctors and nutritionists have agreed on the fact that the balance of gut flora should be around 85 percent good bacteria and 15 percent bad bacteria.

If this ratio gets off-kilter, the resulting condition is known as dysbiosis, which means that there's an imbalance of too much of one type of fungus, yeast or bacteria, which proves to be detrimental to the body in the long run. So bring back the ratio to the right order by consuming these foods.

1. Kefir

This looks and feels like yogurt, and is a fermented dairy product. The unique combination of milk and fermented kefir grains makes it a much sought after fermented food product. The fact that it has been consumed for well over 3,000 years proves that it is a tried and tested food option to bring about a balance in gut flora. The term kefir hails from Russia and Turkey and symbolically



The term kefir hails from Russia and Turkey and symbolically, it means “feeling good.” It tastes acidic and has a tart flavor, but what makes it an absolute winner is that it contains anywhere from 10 to 34 strains of probiotics. Kefir contains a higher culture of beneficial bacteria than its look-alike cousin, yogurt. Since it has garnered quite a fan brigade amongst health conscious people, it’s available in all its bottled glory too! Find one, which is all natural, minus preservatives and unnecessary additives. It is also available in different flavors and is quite delicious.

2. Dosa and idli

Surprised? In our pursuit of the exotic and elusive, we have kind of ignored our good old staple. It’s a sad state of affairs but completely true! Now why is this common food item deemed so nutritious?



The art of preparation of different types of staple dishes like rice has been a part of our culture for years together. Dishes prepared from fermented rice or a blend of rice and pulses, read dosa and idli, should be your go-to foods. If prepared at home by following the fermentation rules, even better!

Dosa and idli are fermented by a mixed culture of microorganisms. The batter is carried out largely by lactic acid bacteria, the same class of microorganisms that you would find in yogurt.

3. Pickles

Pickles are another [great addition to your diet](#). The Lactic acid fermentation produces important antioxidants and nutrients, known as folates, which are absolutely essential for fetal development and proliferation of blood cells. It also inhibits anti-nutrients, such as phytates, which reduce mineral bioavailability and the digestion of protein.



Naturally fermented pickles' taste salty and sour, making them the go-to side dish for every kind of meal. It is said that if you use cancer-fighting vegetables in your pickles, they become even more potent in their cured form. These vegetables that can be used in pickles are of the cruciferous variety, like broccoli, cauliflower and

cabbage. Also, you need to make them at home; these are naturally fermented and hence more potent than store bought ones.

4. Kimchi

As quirky as it sounds; it is mighty beneficial as well. Kimchi is a powerhouse of nutrients. It is Korea's answer to assorted fermented veggies. It's created by putting together the main ingredient, such as Chinese cabbage, with a myriad of foods and spices, like red pepper flakes, carrots, garlic, radishes, ginger, onion, sea salt and fish sauce. The mixture is then kept aside to ferment for a good 3 to 14 days.



5. Kanji

This is something you usually have when you are sick, but this concoction has tons of benefits which you may not be aware of. It is basically rice water, fermented to enhance the beneficial bacteria in the gut.



Kanji is not made out of a single grain broth. It can be made from a number of grains, such as corn, bajra, ragi, and also atta (wheat). Since kanji can be prepared by a number of ways, it brings about a number of nutritional benefits. Do make it at home and we guarantee you will report less sick days at your office! Such is the power of traditional foods.

6. Yogurt

It is one of the most popular probiotic foods and a little more known than some of the other probiotic foods in the list. The live cultured yogurt or Greek yogurt is made from the milk of cows, buffaloes, goats or sheep.



But beware of pasteurized yogurt, because it will be bereft of all the beneficial bacteria. You can reap the benefits of yogurt only when it comes from grass fed animals. The markets are flooded with all kinds of yogurt today, but not all of them are healthy. The sugar and extra additives can do more harm to your health than good. So when you buy yogurt from a supermarket, make sure that that it is organic, and it comes from animals that are grass-fed. Or better still; start setting dahi or yogurt at home. Ensure that the milk source is right.

7. Apple cider vinegar

Apple cider vinegar is not only great for [controlling blood pressure](#), cholesterol, diabetes and also for weight loss, it also brings many other benefits to the table, which include probiotic properties. Never forget to sip a small amount every day.



8. Sauerkraut

There is no end to the benefits of sauerkraut. This is not unlike its Korean cousin. Full of thriving bacteria and enzymes, this is fermented veggies done right. It aids in digestion and the fermented veggies are high on organic acids. The Germans love their sauerkraut; so there is no reason why we shouldn't steal a leaf or two from their health book.



9. Kombucha

Kombucha is from Japan, it is a fermentation of black tea that is started by using a SCOBY, which is a symbiotic colony of bacteria and yeast. Kombucha has been used for ages, and dates back as long as 2,000 years back. It has been said to provide digestive support, increased energy, and [liver detoxification](#).



10. Natto

This is fermented soybeans, a popular probiotic food which hails from Japan. Natto is really healthy as it contains the powerful probiotic bacillus subtilis, which boasts of tons of health benefits which include bolstering your immune system, supporting cardiovascular health and improving your digestion with vitamin K2. Additionally, Natto contains a powerful anti-inflammatory cancer-fighting enzyme called nattokinase.

Probiotic Food Recipes

With the wide array of probiotic foods available, you must be wondering which ones are just right for you. Homemade should be what you go for, undoubtedly. Fermented naturally, it is chock-a-block with the right nutrients and minus the additives detrimental to our health.

1. Carrot Kanji

When in doubt, have carrot kanji, the super cool drink that has been around for ages, nurturing our health in many ways than one. This is the choice of drink during the festival of colors, Holi. This drink is really beneficial and aids in digestion.



Ingredients

- 1 tbsp. Brown Mustard Seeds, crushed
- 4-5 large carrots, peeled
- 1 large beet, peeled
- 6-7 cups of filtered water (add more if required)
- 1 tablespoon Fine Sea Salt

Method

- Crush the mustard seeds with the help of a mortar pestle or a coffee grinder. You do not really have to ground it finely, coarsely ground is okay.
- Chop the carrots and beets into thin long pieces.
- Put all the ingredients in a glass jar and cover it with a lid or cheesecloth.
- Find a sunny spot to keep the jar for at least one week, and keep stirring it with a wooden spoon daily.
- Once the kanji develops a tangy flavor, you will know that your drink is fermented.
- Strain the drink; you can keep the leftover vegetables to use later.
- Refrigerate the drink and enjoy.

2. Ginger Pickle

Ginger is known for its anti-inflammatory benefits. When it is fermented and cured, the benefits increase manifold. Ginger also aids in digestion. This is one of the best **probiotic foods** to have every day with your main meals.



Ingredients

- 1/2 kg raw ginger, julienne
- Juice of 13-15 lemons
- 2-3 tsp. vinegar
- 3-4 tsp. salt or to taste

Method

- Peel and mince the ginger.
- In a jar, add the ginger, salt, vinegar and lemon juice. Shake the jar vigorously.
- Let the pickle rest for a day or two in the sun.
- When the ginger is a little pink, you will know the pickle is ready to eat.

Fermented foods have been part of our diets for ages. It is the time we bring them back to our table and make them a [part of our daily diet](#). You can even think of supplementation if you are too busy to prepare fermented foods daily. Consult your doctor about the probiotic supplements right for you. So, make this delicious addition to your diet; trust us you, won't regret it!

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