

# Indian Diabetic Foods: Complete Glycemic Index Guide

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Your Essential Reference for Blood Sugar-Friendly Indian Eating

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## What is Glycemic Index (GI)?

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The **Glycemic Index (GI)** is a ranking system that measures how quickly foods containing carbohydrates raise your blood sugar levels after eating. Foods are ranked on a scale of 0 to 100, compared to pure glucose (which has a GI of 100).

## GI Categories

Category	GI Range	Effect on Blood Sugar
Low GI	55 or less	Slow, gradual rise
Medium GI	56-69	Moderate rise
High GI	70 or more	Rapid spike

## Why GI Matters for Diabetics

- Better Blood Sugar Control:** Low GI foods cause smaller, slower rises in blood glucose
- Reduced Insulin Demand:** Gradual glucose release means less stress on your pancreas
- Sustained Energy:** Avoid the energy crashes that follow high GI meals
- Weight Management:** Low GI foods keep you feeling full longer
- Lower HbA1c:** Studies show low GI diets can reduce HbA1c by 0.5-1%

**Important:** GI is just one tool. Portion size (Glycemic Load) also matters!

## Complete GI Chart: Indian Foods

### Rice & Rice Products

Food Item	GI Value	Category	Serving Size
White Rice (polished)	73	High	1 cup cooked
Basmati Rice (white)	58	Medium	1 cup cooked
Brown Rice	50	Low	1 cup cooked
Hand-Pounded Rice	52	Low	1 cup cooked
Red Rice (Kerala)	55	Low	1 cup cooked
Black Rice (Manipuri)	42	Low	1 cup cooked
Parboiled Rice	38	Low	1 cup cooked
Idli	77	High	2 pieces
Dosa (plain)	77	High	1 medium
Upma	69	Medium	1 cup
Pongal	68	Medium	1 cup
Rice Flakes (Poha)	64	Medium	1 cup

### Rotis & Breads

Food Item	GI Value	Category	Serving Size
White Bread	75	High	2 slices
Naan	71	High	1 piece
Wheat Roti (atta)	62	Medium	2 rotis
Multigrain Roti	52	Low	2 rotis
Jowar (Sorghum) Roti	48	Low	2 rotis
Bajra (Pearl Millet) Roti	55	Low	2 rotis
Ragi (Finger Millet) Roti	54	Low	2 rotis
Makki (Corn) Roti	52	Low	2 rotis
Besan (Gram Flour) Chilla	35	Low	2 pieces
Oats Roti	40	Low	2 rotis

## Dal & Pulses

Food Item	GI Value	Category	Serving Size
Rajma (Kidney Beans)	29	Low	1 cup cooked
Chana Dal	28	Low	1 cup cooked
Moong Dal (whole)	31	Low	1 cup cooked
Moong Dal (split, yellow)	38	Low	1 cup cooked
Masoor Dal (Red Lentils)	30	Low	1 cup cooked
Toor/Arhar Dal	29	Low	1 cup cooked
Urad Dal	32	Low	1 cup cooked
Chole (Chickpeas)	33	Low	1 cup cooked

Food Item	GI Value	Category	Serving Size
Lobia (Black-eyed Peas)	42	Low	1 cup cooked
Soybeans	15	Low	1 cup cooked
Sprouted Moong	25	Low	1 cup

## Vegetables

<b>Very Low GI (Under 30)</b>			
Food Item	GI Value	Category	Serving Size
Spinach (Palak)	15	Low	1 cup
Bottle Gourd (Lauki)	15	Low	1 cup
Bitter Gourd (Karela)	18	Low	1 cup
Ridge Gourd (Turai)	15	Low	1 cup
Snake Gourd	15	Low	1 cup
Cucumber (Kheera)	15	Low	1 cup
Cabbage	10	Low	1 cup
Cauliflower (Gobi)	10	Low	1 cup
Broccoli	10	Low	1 cup
Tomato	15	Low	1 medium
Capsicum	15	Low	1 cup
Bhindi (Okra)	20	Low	1 cup
Drumstick (Moringa)	18	Low	1 cup
<b>Medium GI (30-55)</b>			

Food Item	GI Value	Category	Serving Size
Carrot	35	Low	1 cup
Beetroot	61	Medium	1 cup
Green Peas (Matar)	48	Low	1 cup
Sweet Potato (Shakarkand)	54	Low	1 medium
<b>High GI (Above 55)</b>			
Potato (boiled)	78	High	1 medium
Pumpkin (Kaddu)	75	High	1 cup
Arbi (Colocasia)	63	Medium	1 cup
Suran (Yam)	65	Medium	1 cup

## Fruits

<b>Low GI Fruits (Best Choices)</b>			
Food Item	GI Value	Category	Serving Size
Guava (Amrood)	12	Low	1 medium
Apple (Seb)	36	Low	1 medium
Orange (Santra)	43	Low	1 medium
Pear (Nashpati)	38	Low	1 medium
Mosambi (Sweet Lime)	43	Low	1 medium
Plum (Aloo Bukhara)	39	Low	2 medium
Peach (Aadu)	42	Low	1 medium
Strawberry	40	Low	1 cup

Food Item	GI Value	Category	Serving Size
Jamun (Black Plum)	25	Low	10-12 pieces
Pomegranate (Anar)	35	Low	½ cup seeds
Cherries	22	Low	1 cup

#### Medium GI Fruits (Moderate)

Mango (Aam)	56	Medium	½ cup
Papaya	60	Medium	1 cup
Banana (Kela) - ripe	62	Medium	1 small
Banana - unripe	42	Low	1 small
Grapes (Angoor)	59	Medium	15-20 pieces
Kiwi	52	Low	1 medium
Chikoo (Sapota)	55	Medium	1 small

#### High GI Fruits (Limit)

Watermelon (Tarbooz)	76	High	1 cup
Pineapple (Ananas)	66	Medium	1 cup
Lychee	79	High	10 pieces
Dates (Khajoor)	62	Medium	2 pieces

### Indian Snacks

Food Item	GI Value	Category	Serving Size
<b>Better Choices</b>			
Roasted Chana	28	Low	30g

Food Item	GI Value	Category	Serving Size
Makhana (Fox Nuts)	35	Low	1 cup
Roasted Peanuts	14	Low	30g
Mixed Nuts (unsalted)	25	Low	30g
Sprouts Chaat	30	Low	1 cup
Dhokla	45	Low	2 pieces
<b>Avoid/Limit</b>			
Samosa	66	Medium	1 piece
Bhujia	74	High	30g
Chakli/Murukku	75	High	3 pieces
Mathri	68	Medium	2 pieces
Jalebi	95	High	1 piece
Gulab Jamun	85	High	1 piece
Rasgulla	80	High	1 piece
Halwa	75	High	½ cup

## Dairy & Beverages

Food Item	GI Value	Category	Serving Size
Milk (full fat)	31	Low	1 cup
Milk (toned)	32	Low	1 cup
Curd/Dahi (plain)	28	Low	1 cup
Buttermilk (Chaas)	25	Low	1 glass

Food Item	GI Value	Category	Serving Size
Paneer	0	Low	100g
Lassi (sweetened)	60	Medium	1 glass
Lassi (unsweetened)	28	Low	1 glass
Coconut Water	35	Low	1 glass
Sugarcane Juice	70	High	1 glass
Mango Shake	75	High	1 glass

## Low GI Alternatives for High GI Foods

Make these simple swaps to dramatically reduce your meal's glycemic impact:

### Rice Swaps

Instead of...	Choose...	GI Reduction
White Rice (73)	Parboiled Rice (38)	-35 points
White Rice (73)	Brown Rice (50)	-23 points
White Rice (73)	Black Rice (42)	-31 points
Plain Idli (77)	Oats Idli (52)	-25 points
Plain Dosa (77)	Ragi Dosa (54)	-23 points

### Roti Swaps

Instead of...	Choose...	GI Reduction
White Bread (75)	Multigrain Bread (52)	-23 points

Instead of...	Choose...	GI Reduction
Naan (71)	Tandoori Roti (62)	-9 points
Wheat Roti (62)	Jowar Roti (48)	-14 points
Wheat Roti (62)	Besan Chilla (35)	-27 points
Maida Paratha	Oats Paratha (45)	-20 points

## Vegetable Swaps

Instead of...	Choose...	GI Reduction
Potato (78)	Sweet Potato (54)	-24 points
Potato (78)	Cauliflower (10)	-68 points
Pumpkin (75)	Bottle Gourd (15)	-60 points
Arbi (63)	Mushrooms (10)	-53 points

## Snack Swaps

Instead of...	Choose...	GI Reduction
Bhujia (74)	Roasted Chana (28)	-46 points
Samosa (66)	Dhokla (45)	-21 points
Chips	Makhana (35)	-40 points
Jalebi (95)	Dates with Nuts (45)	-50 points

## Fruit Swaps

Instead of...	Choose...	GI Reduction
Watermelon (76)	Guava (12)	-64 points

Instead of...	Choose...	GI Reduction
Ripe Mango (56)	Apple (36)	-20 points
Grapes (59)	Cherries (22)	-37 points
Banana (62)	Jamun (25)	-37 points

## How to Combine Foods to Lower Meal GI

The GI of your meal isn't just about individual foods—**combinations matter!**

### 5 Golden Rules for Lower Meal GI

#### 1. Add Protein to Every Meal

Protein slows digestion and reduces blood sugar spikes.

##### Do This:

- Rice + Dal + Vegetable (instead of just rice + vegetable)
- Roti + Paneer sabzi + Salad
- Idli + Sambar + Boiled Egg

#### 2. Include Healthy Fats

Fats slow gastric emptying, reducing glucose absorption rate.

##### Do This:

- Add ghee (1 tsp) to dal-rice
- Use mustard/olive oil in cooking
- Include nuts with meals
- Add coconut chutney with dosa

#### 3. Start with Fiber

Eat vegetables and salad BEFORE carbs to create a fiber barrier.

#### Meal Order:

1. First: Salad/Raita
2. Second: Dal/Protein
3. Last: Rice/Roti

#### **4. Add Acid (Vinegar/Lemon)**

Acidic foods can lower meal GI by up to 30%!

#### Do This:

- Squeeze lemon on dal-chawal
- Have pickle (in moderation) with meals
- Include tamarind-based sambar
- Add vinegar to salads

#### **5. Cool Your Carbs**

Cooling cooked rice/potatoes creates "resistant starch" that lowers GI.

#### Do This:

- Make rice ahead and refrigerate
- Use day-old rice for pulao
- Cold potato salad beats hot potato

### **Practical Combination Examples**

High GI Meal	Lower GI Alternative
Plain white rice	Rice + dal + ghee + lemon
Just rotis with sabzi	Roti + paneer + salad + curd
Dosa with potato filling	Dosa + sambar + coconut chutney

High GI Meal	Lower GI Alternative
Rice with just curry	Rice + rajma + raita + salad
Paratha alone	Paratha + curd + pickle + sprouts

## Sample Low-GI Indian Meals

### Breakfast Options

#### Option 1: South Indian (GI ~45)

- 2 Ragi Dosa
- 1 cup Sambar (low GI vegetables)
- 2 tbsp Coconut Chutney
- 1 Boiled Egg

#### Option 2: North Indian (GI ~42)

- 2 Besan Chilla with vegetables
- 1 cup Plain Curd
- Green Chutney
- 1 small Apple

#### Option 3: Quick & Easy (GI ~40)

- 1 cup Vegetable Oats Upma
- 1 glass Buttermilk
- 5-6 Almonds
- 1 Guava

#### Option 4: Protein-Rich (GI ~38)

- 2 Moong Dal Chilla

- 1 cup Sprouts
- Mint Chutney
- Green Tea

## **Lunch Options**

### **Option 1: Traditional Thali (GI ~48)**

- 1 cup Parboiled/Brown Rice
- 1 cup Dal (any)
- 1 cup Vegetable Sabzi (non-starchy)
- 1 cup Salad with lemon
- 1 cup Raita
- 1 tsp Ghee

### **Option 2: Roti Meal (GI ~45)**

- 2 Jowar/Bajra Rotis
- 1 cup Paneer Bhurji
- 1 cup Mixed Vegetable Sabzi
- Cucumber-Tomato Salad
- 1 cup Curd

### **Option 3: Protein Bowl (GI ~42)**

- 1 cup Chole (without bhatura)
- 2 Multigrain Rotis
- Onion-Cucumber Salad
- Mint-Coriander Chutney
- 1 Orange

### **Option 4: South Indian (GI ~46)**

- 1 cup Brown Rice

- 1 cup Sambar
- 1 cup Drumstick Curry
- 1 cup Buttermilk
- Vegetable Kootu

## Dinner Options

### Option 1: Light & Easy (GI ~40)

- 1 cup Khichdi (moong dal + rice)
- 1 cup Kadhi
- Steamed Vegetables
- 1 cup Salad

### Option 2: Protein-Focused (GI ~38)

- 2 Multigrain Rotis
- 1 cup Palak Paneer
- 1 cup Mixed Dal
- Cucumber Raita

### Option 3: South Indian (GI ~44)

- 2 Oats Idli
- 1 cup Vegetable Sambar
- Coconut Chutney
- 1 cup Clear Soup

### Option 4: Quick Dinner (GI ~42)

- 1 cup Vegetable Daliya (broken wheat)
- 1 cup Curd
- Sautéed Greens
- Roasted Peanuts (handful)

## Snack Options (GI under 40)

Time	Snack Option	GI
Mid-morning	Handful of Makhana + Green Tea	~35
Mid-morning	1 Apple + 5 Almonds	~32
Evening	Roasted Chana (30g)	~28
Evening	Sprouts Chaat with lemon	~30
Evening	2 Dhokla + Green Chutney	~45
Evening	Vegetable Soup + Seeds	~35
Night (if needed)	1 glass Warm Milk + 2 Walnuts	~30

## Quick Reference Card

### BEST CHOICES (GI Under 40)

**Grains:** Parboiled rice, Oats, Barley **Rotis:** Besan chilla, Oats roti **Pulses:** ALL (Chana, Rajma, Moong, Masoor) **Vegetables:** ALL gourds, leafy greens, cauliflower **Fruits:** Guava, Jamun, Apple, Orange, Pear **Snacks:** Makhana, Roasted chana, Nuts **Dairy:** Curd, Paneer, Buttermilk

### MODERATE (GI 40-55) - Watch Portions

**Grains:** Brown rice, Basmati rice **Rotis:** Wheat roti, Bajra roti **Vegetables:** Sweet potato, Carrots, Peas **Fruits:** Banana (unripe), Mango (small), Papaya

### LIMIT/AVOID (GI Above 55)

**Grains:** White rice, Maida products **Breads:** White bread, Naan **Vegetables:** Potato, Pumpkin **Fruits:** Watermelon, Lychee **Snacks:** Bhujia, Samosa, Sweets **Drinks:** Sugarcane juice, Sweet lassi

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## Final Tips for Success

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1. **Don't eliminate carbs** - Just choose better ones
  2. **Combine wisely** - Protein + Fat + Fiber with every meal
  3. **Eat slowly** - Chewing well aids digestion
  4. **Time your fruits** - Best eaten between meals, not after
  5. **Stay hydrated** - Water helps regulate blood sugar
  6. **Monitor yourself** - Track how different foods affect YOUR body
  7. **Be consistent** - Small changes sustained beat dramatic diets
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**Remember:** This guide is for education. Always work with your doctor and dietitian for personalized advice.

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