

The background of the entire page is a top-down view of various South Asian ingredients and dishes. At the top left, a small bowl of bright green chutney. At the top center, a large bowl of orange-red curry with chunks of meat or vegetables. At the top right, a small bowl of yellow turmeric powder. In the bottom left, a bowl of yellow dal (lentil soup) garnished with fresh green cilantro leaves. In the bottom right, a large bowl of green chutney with several cubes of white paneer (cottage cheese) floating in it. Long, thin green leaves, possibly dill or fennel fronds, are scattered across the dark grey, textured surface.

**Teladoc**  
HEALTH

Your guide to

# South Asian cuisine

Simple strategies  
to help you thrive

**Bonus: 1-day  
sample menu**





# Welcome!

Planning healthy meals and snacks is at the heart of any wellness journey. But there is no one meal plan that is best for everyone. The colors, flavors, and aromas of food help to connect us to who we are. Plus, we all have different nutrition needs, likes and dislikes, budgets, and more. That's why we created Your guide to South Asian cuisine.

This guide is packed with healthy-eating ideas infused with a taste of the South Asian subcontinent. We'll spice things up with meal planning tools to help you create a strategy that will work for you. Use this guide to create lasting changes so you can live better.

Enjoy!  
Your Teladoc Health Team

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# Understanding the basics

Food is made of three basic nutrients that provide fuel to your body: carbohydrates, protein, and fats. Knowing how the body uses each nutrient and meeting the goals below will help you build well-balanced meals that are healthy and satisfying.



## Carbohydrates

Carbs are the sugars and starches that your body breaks down into glucose to use for energy. Carbs cause your blood sugar to rise. Too many of the less nutritious kinds, like added sugars, can cause weight gain and increase your risk of diabetes and heart disease. If you have diabetes, it's important to closely monitor carb intake.

**Your goal: Choose moderate portions of the more nutritious carb foods. Avoid added sugars.**



## Non-starchy veggies

Non-starchy veggies are low in carbs and calories and a great source of fiber, vitamins, and minerals.

**Your goal: Fill half of your plate with a variety of non-starchy veggies at each meal. It's not necessary to limit portion sizes like you do with other carb-containing foods — eat as much as you desire.**



## Protein

Protein helps build and keep muscle. It also helps you feel full. Protein has very little impact on your blood sugar.

**Your goal: Include protein when eating carbs. This slows the rise of blood sugar following a meal or snack. Opt for lean or plant-based protein sources.**



## Fats

Fats help your brain and nervous system work, and add great flavor and texture to food. When eaten alone, fats will not raise your blood sugar.

**Your goal: Choose foods that contain healthy fats (poly and monounsaturated). Limit saturated fats and avoid trans fats.**

*Curious about how these nutrients translate into the foods you eat? Keep reading to take a look at our detailed Teladoc Health food groups guide.*

# Teladoc Health food groups

Figuring out what to eat! Below you'll find examples of foods that fall into each group. Depending on your health needs, you may be able to eat more than one serving at a meal. Use this as a guide to build a variety of satisfying meals that help you reach your goals.



## Non-starchy veggies

*One serving contains about 5 grams of carbohydrates and around 25 calories  
½ cup cooked or 1 cup raw for one non-starchy vegetable choice below*

<b>Artichoke</b>	<b>Green cabbage, red cabbage, bok choy</b>
<b>Arugula</b>	<b>Greens</b> (collard, mustard, turnip, etc.)
<b>Asparagus</b>	<b>Kohlrabi</b>
<b>Bamboo shoots</b>	<b>Methi leaves</b>
<b>Broccoli</b>	<b>Mushrooms</b>
<b>Brussels sprouts</b>	<b>Okra</b> (bhindi or lady finger)
<b>Cauliflower</b> (gobhi)	<b>Onions</b>
<b>Chukandar</b>	<b>Peppers</b> (red, green, yellow)
<b>Cucumber</b>	<b>Spinach, kale</b>
<b>Daikon</b>	<b>Squash</b> (lauki, bitter melon, tinda)
<b>Eggplant</b> (baingan or aubergine)	<b>Tomatoes</b>
<b>Green beans, wax beans, snake beans</b>	<b>Water chestnuts</b>



## Carbohydrates (fruits)

*One serving contains 15 grams of carbs and around 60 calories*

<b>Apple</b>	<i>1 small (4 oz)</i>
<b>Banana</b>	<i>1 extra small or ½ large</i>
<b>Blueberries</b>	<i>¾ cup</i>
<b>Dried fruit</b> (raisins, dates)	<i>2 Tbsp</i>
<b>Grapes</b>	<i>17 small</i>
<b>Mango</b>	<i>½ cup or ½ small</i>
<b>Melon</b>	<i>1 cup, diced</i>
<b>Nectarine or peach</b>	<i>1 medium</i>
<b>Orange</b>	<i>1 medium</i>
<b>Papaya</b>	<i>1 cup cubed or ½ papaya</i>
<b>Pineapple</b>	<i>¾ cup fresh or ½ cup canned</i>
<b>Plum</b>	<i>⅓ cup or ¼ plantain</i>
<b>Raspberries or blackberries</b>	<i>1 cup</i>
<b>Strawberries</b>	<i>1¼ cup whole</i>
<b>Watermelon</b>	<i>1¼ cups diced</i>



# Teladoc Health food groups



## Carbohydrates (starches)

*One serving contains 15 grams of carbs and around 80 calories*

<b>Bagel</b>	1/4 large bagel (1 oz)
<b>Beans and pulses</b> (lentil, dhal, garbanzo, kidney, pinto, etc.)	1/2 cup cooked also = 1 protein serving
<b>Bread slice</b>	1 slice (1 oz)
<b>Chapati</b>	1 oz
<b>Corn</b>	1/2 cup or 1/2 large cob
<b>English muffin</b>	1/2 muffin
<b>Green peas (matar)</b>	1/2 cup
<b>Grits</b>	1/2 cup cooked
<b>Hamburger/hot dog bun</b>	1/2 bun
<b>Idli</b>	1 small
<b>Naan</b>	1/4 of an 8" piece (1 oz)
<b>Oatmeal</b>	1/2 cup cooked
<b>Pappadum</b>	2 small (about 5" across)
<b>Pumpkin</b>	1/2 cup
<b>Plain potato, sweet potato, yam (alu or aloo)</b>	1/2 cup
<b>Rice, pasta, quinoa, millet</b>	1/3 cup cooked
<b>Winter squash (butternut or acorn)</b>	1 cup



## Carbohydrates (milk & yogurt)

*One serving contains 6-12 grams of carbs and around 80-160 calories*

<b>Chocolate milk</b>	1/2 cup
<b>Cow's milk</b> (whole, reduced fat, skim)	1 cup
<b>Kefir or lassi</b> (plain, unsweetened)	1 cup
<b>Rice milk</b> (plain, unsweetened)	1 cup
<b>Almond milk</b> (plain, unsweetened)	1 cup
<b>Soy milk</b> (plain, unsweetened)	1 cup
<b>Yogurt, Greek or regular</b> (plain, unsweetened)	6 oz

*Note: If food/drink is flavored or sweetened, read the label for more details*

# Teladoc Health food groups



## Protein

*One serving contains 7 grams of protein and around 35-100 calories*

<b>Beans and pulses</b> (lentil, dhal, garbanzo, kidney, pinto, etc.) *	<i>½ cup cooked also = 1 carb serving</i>
<b>Cheese</b>	<i>1 oz</i>
<b>Chicken, turkey, fish, beef, lamb, goat, pork</b>	<i>1 oz</i>
<b>Cottage cheese</b>	<i>¼ cup</i>
<b>Egg substitute</b>	<i>¼ cup</i>
<b>Egg whites</b>	<i>2 egg whites</i>
<b>Eggs</b>	<i>1 egg</i>
<b>Nut spread, no sugar added</b> (peanut, almond, soy butter) *	<i>1 Tbsp</i>
<b>Nuts and seeds</b> (almonds, cashews, pistachios, peanuts, flaxseeds, pumpkin seeds)*	<i>1 Tbsp</i>
<b>Tempeh</b> (check label for carb counts) *	<i>¼ cup</i>
<b>Tofu</b> *	<i>½ cup</i>



## Fats

*One serving contains 5 grams of fat, around 45 calories, usually 0 carbs, but always check the label*

<b>Almonds or cashews</b> *	<i>6 nuts</i>
<b>Avocado</b>	<i>2 Tbsp</i>
<b>Bacon</b>	<i>1 slice</i>
<b>Butter, stick</b>	<i>1 tsp</i>
<b>Coconut milk, canned</b>	<i>⅓ cup light or 1½ Tbsp regular</i>
<b>Coconut, shredded</b>	<i>2 Tbsp</i>
<b>Mayonnaise</b>	<i>1 tsp regular or 1 Tbsp reduced fat</i>
<b>Nut butters</b> (almond butter, peanut butter, cashew butter, etc.) *	<i>1½ tsp</i>
<b>Oil</b> (olive oil, canola oil, mustard oil, vegetable oil, etc.)	<i>1 tsp</i>
<b>Olives</b>	<i>8 black or 10 green</i>
<b>Peanuts*</b>	<i>10 nuts</i>
<b>Pecans and walnuts</b>	<i>4 halves</i>
<b>Pistachios*</b>	<i>16 nuts</i>
<b>Sour cream, regular</b>	<i>2 Tbsp</i>

\* Plant-based protein foods provide quality protein, healthy fats, and fiber. They vary in how much fat and carbohydrate they contain, so make sure to read labels.

# Balance your plate

You can eat well and still enjoy yummy meals from your culture! The balanced plate model is an easy, delicious way to fuel your body. Following this format will help you fill your plate with healthy foods in the right proportions.

It's as simple as eyeballing it. A balanced plate has 50% non-starchy veggies, 25% lean proteins, and 25% carbs. It may also include a little healthy fat.

Start with a **9-inch plate**. Measure your usual plates and see how wide they are. If they're bigger than 9 inches, try using smaller plates. You can also fill your regular plates to the 9-inch mark.

Use the Teladoc Health food groups Guide on the previous pages to help you fill your plate. You'll find lots of tasty options to help create a variety of balanced and satisfying meals. Plugging different foods into the sections of the plate can even inspire creativity and get you out of a rut.

## 50%

### **Non-starchy veggies = half of your plate**

Options include: Eggplant, Leafy greens (mustard greens, spinach (saag), snake beans, chukandar, cucumbers, bean sprouts, okra (bhindi), tomatoes

## 25%

### **Carbs = a quarter of your plate**

Options include: Brown rice, whole wheat chapati, idli, upma, sweet potato, peas, pumpkin, fruit, yogurt

## 25%

### **Proteins = another quarter of your plate**

Options include: Lentils\*, chickpeas\* and kidney beans\*, eggs, nuts, poultry, meat, fish, and tofu (\*also contain carbs)



### **Healthy fats = just a bit**

Options include: Olive oil, mustard oil, nuts, seeds (pumpkin, sesame, sunflower, etc)



# Healthy portion sizes, any time

Now that you know how to balance your plate, it's important to consider how *much* you eat. When it comes to portion sizes, it can feel like the world is working against us. Restaurant servings for one can be enough for a family to share. Even the plates we use at home have gotten bigger!

Luckily, you can retrain your eyes — and your stomach — to recognize what “enough” looks and feels like. Use your hand as a guide to estimate portions that will satisfy and help you reach your goals.



## Fist

Whole grains, starchy vegetables, whole fruits



## Palm of hand

Meat, fish, tofu, tempeh



## Thumb

Dressings, dips, desserts



## Two flat hands side by side

Total amount of food per meal



## Flat hand

Non-starchy vegetables



# How to build a healthy meal

Knowing what to eat is only the first step. Here are some strategies you can use to enjoy healthy foods that fit your nutrition needs:



## Plan and shop

- Make a meal plan and shop only for foods that are on your plan.
- Don't be fooled by discounts. "Good deal" doesn't mean "good for you."



## Prep ahead

- Wash, cut, and store produce in containers right after grocery shopping.
- Cook once, eat twice: Prepare more than you need so you can enjoy leftovers, too.



## Get cooking

- **Cut the fat:**
  - Simmer foods in water or vegetable stock instead of frying in oil.
  - Use a spray of extra-virgin olive oil instead of ghee or shortening.
- **Slash the sodium:**
  - Skip the salt in recipes. Replace it with your favorite herbs and spices.
  - Use lemon juice and vinegar to tone down bitterness and sharpen flavors.
- **Bump up the veggies:**
  - Double the amount of non-starchy veggies in a recipe.
  - Grill, roast or steam veggies to mellow bitterness and help bring out their flavor.
- **Include lean proteins:**
  - Make sure your meals contain lean meat, fish, eggs, beans or tofu.
  - Cook using healthier methods: Grill, roast or sauté.
- **Choose whole grains:**
  - Whole grains are also sources of carbs and calories. Portion size matters!



## Eat and enjoy

- **Be mindful when eating:**
  - Avoid distractions like the TV, your phone or your tablet.
  - Slow your pace by putting down your fork between bites. Chew and savor!

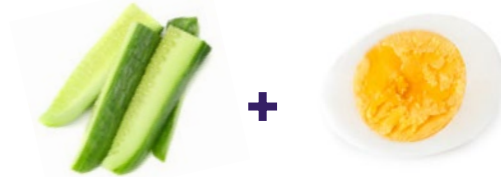
# Smarter snacks

Having a snack between meals can curb hunger throughout the day. Well-planned snacks can also keep you from eating too much at meals. Snacks that contain both produce and fat or protein are your best bet. That combo will help fill you up and keep you satisfied until mealtime.

Here are a few dynamic snack duos:



**Sliced radishes + roasted chana**



**Cucumber spears + boiled egg**



**Celery sticks + hummus**



**Mango + plain yogurt**



**Red bell pepper slices + paneer cheese**



**Lettuce cups + masala tofu**

If you're craving a snack, check in with your body. Are you low on energy? Is your stomach empty? Avoid eating when you're bored or stressed. Instead, save snacking for when you need extra fuel to make it to the next meal.



## Breakfast: quinoa upma

Makes 1 serving



Calories	Total fat	Sat. fat	Sodium	Cholesterol	Carbs	Fiber	Sugars	Protein	Potassium
436	25 g	2 g	185 mg	0 mg	45 g	6 g	2 g	11 g	485 mg

### INGREDIENTS

¼ cup quinoa  
2 tsp vegetable oil  
⅛ tsp ground mustard seed  
1-2 curry leaves  
1 oz cashews  
½ cup vegetables, chopped (carrots, green beans, onions)  
Dash of chili powder, coriander

### PREPARATION

Cook quinoa per package directions. Heat vegetable oil in a pan and add ground mustard seed and curry leaves. Saute until fragrant. Add cashews, chopped vegetables and seasonings like to taste. Cook until soft. Remove curry leaves. Add cooked quinoa to the vegetables in the pan, combine, and serve.

#### Veggie boost:

Serve your upma on top of a bed of baby spinach or other greens.

#### Flavor boost:

Top with a squeeze of lemon or lime juice.

## Lunch: chana dal pancakes

Makes 4 pancakes, serving size is 2 pancakes



Calories	Total fat	Sat. fat	Sodium	Cholesterol	Carbs	Fiber	Sugars	Protein	Potassium
352	9 g	6 g	227 mg	1 mg	58 g	13 g	9 g	13 g	230 mg

### INGREDIENTS

15 oz can low-sodium chickpeas (chana), drained and rinsed

½ cup shredded carrots

½ cup spinach

1 cup chopped fenugreek leaves or mustard greens

3-4 curry leaves, chopped

1 Tbsp chiles, chopped

1 tsp fresh ginger, grated

2 Tbsp low-fat Greek yogurt

½ tsp baking soda

¼ tsp vegetable oil

Chutney

### PREPARATION

In a bowl, mash the chana into a paste with a fork. Mix in shredded carrots and spinach, fenugreek (methi) leaves or mustard greens, curry leaves, chiles, grated ginger and Greek yogurt (curd). Add baking soda and mix well. Warm a skillet over medium heat and add vegetable oil. Pour ¼th of the batter into the pan. Cook until browned and then flip to brown on the other side. Repeat with remaining batter. Serve with chutney.

#### Veggie boost:

Serve with a side of chopped tomato, cucumber, and onion salad.

#### Flavor boost:

Use savory tomato and onion chutney or green chutney for a pop of flavor.



## Dinner: chicken curry with brown rice and raita

Makes 1 serving



Calories	Total fat	Sat. fat	Sodium	Cholesterol	Carbs	Fiber	Sugars	Protein	Potassium
486	13 g	7 g	620 mg	84 mg	56 g	7 g	13 g	35 g	1,434 mg

### INGREDIENTS

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup brown rice or quinoa  
3 oz chicken  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup curry sauce, low-sodium  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup plain low-fat Greek yogurt  
1 cup (total) cucumber, tomato and onion, chopped

### PREPARATION

Simmer chicken in curry sauce and serve over brown rice or quinoa. For the raita, mix plain yogurt with tomato, cucumber and onion.

#### Veggie boost:

Add 1 cup of curried eggplant or cauliflower.

#### Flavor boost:

Sprinkle coriander leaves and cumin into to the raita for a bold taste.

## Snack options:



2-3 dates plus  
1 oz nuts



Sliced tomatoes and  
cucumber plus  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup  
roasted chana (chickpeas)

# Understanding food labels

Learning how to read food labels can help you make healthier choices. Use this guide to help you make the most of the Nutrition Facts label.

**Keep in mind that the healthiest foods, like fruits and veggies, don't have food labels.**

## Step 1: what's in a serving?

- Read the number of servings per container.
- Learn the size of each serving.
- Remember, the numbers below are for ONE serving.
- If you're eating more than one serving, multiply the numbers below by that amount.

## Step 2: aim for less:

- Saturated fat
- Trans fats
- Sodium (below 2,300 mg per day)
- Sugar
- Added sugars

## Step 3: aim for more:

- Fiber
- Protein
- Nutrients like vitamin D, iron, potassium, and calcium.

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
<b>Serving size</b>	<b>2/3 cup (55g)</b>
<b>Amount per serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>230</b>
<b>% Daily Value*</b>	
<b>Total Fat</b> 8g	<b>10%</b>
Saturated Fat 1g	<b>5%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 160mg	<b>7%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 37g	<b>13%</b>
Dietary Fiber 4g	<b>14%</b>
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	<b>20%</b>
<b>Protein</b> 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 235mg	6%

## Step 4: check the ingredients list (separate from the nutrition facts panel)

- Ingredients are listed in by quantity, from highest to lowest.
- Avoid food additives like "monosodium glutamate," "sodium nitrates," and "food coloring". These are likely processed foods.
- Avoid items with ingredients that contain the word "hydrogenated", this means trans-fat. Avoid added sugars, often listed as "high fructose corn syrup," "dextrose," "sucrose," "honey," and "molasses".



# Dining out tips and tricks

Going to restaurants is a part of life. While it can be a challenge to dine out healthfully, it can be done! Here's how you can set yourself up for success:

## Before you go

- Review the menu online to help make better choices when it's time to order.
- Eat normally. Skipping meals just sets you up to be overly hungry when you sit down to order.
- Have a produce and protein snack an hour before the meal to curb hunger.

## At the restaurant

- Choose the treat that you like best—drink, starter, bread or dessert—to go along with your meal. Enjoy it!
- Cut your meal in half. Pack up the rest to bring home as leftovers.
- Ask for lower-calorie options like salad dressing on the side, light oil on pasta and veggies, and grilled chicken instead of crispy!
- Stick with balanced plate portions: 50% non-starchy veggies, 25% lean protein, 25% carbs.
- Chew food well and wait until you have swallowed your current bite to take another one.

It's okay if one meal isn't "perfect." But by planning ahead, you'll be able to stay closer to your wellness goals!







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