



Heart-Healthy Eating South Asian/Indian Style

Advice from the National Lipid Association Clinician's Lifestyle Modification Toolbox

South Asians are people from India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Pakistan, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

Why should you follow a heart-healthy diet?

- South Asians are at a higher risk of chronic health problems, like heart disease.
- A heart-healthy diet can help you manage risk factors for heart disease. Risk factors are high cholesterol, excess weight, high blood pressure, and diabetes.
- Choosing South Asian foods that are heart-healthy can improve your health and well-being. It can improve your family's health, too.

Tips for Eating Heart-Healthy South Asian/Indian Style

Choose whole grains foods

- Brown rice, 100% whole-wheat flour, barley, bulgur, millet, or Ragi (pearl millet) flour
- Add ground oatmeal, soy, or amaranth flour to your flour of choice

Choose plant protein foods

- Use tofu in place of paneer
- Choose lentils (dal) or legumes (beans) like chickpeas, kidney beans, or black-eyed peas
- If you prefer animal protein foods, choose fish and chicken, and non-fat or low-fat dairy foods

Enjoy healthful foods when dining out

- Choose appetizers cooked in a tandoor, fruit chaat, and roasted papad served with mint chutney
- Choose fish and chicken entrees cooked in a tandoor
- Ask for foods to be made with liquid plant oils like canola and olive oils
- Ask naan to be made without butter
- Avoid food made with cream or butter (makhani), coconut oil, palm/palm kernel oil and fried foods



Limit foods that are not heart-healthy

- Avoid ghee, vanaspati, butter, cream, palm/palm kernel oil and coconut oil
- Avoid refined carbohydrate foods like white rice and white flour
- Avoid sugary drinks like sweet lassi, shikanji, and Rooh Afza
- Limit sweet desserts
- Limit salt intake to less than 2300 mg per day

Mind your portions

- **Fill ½ your plate** with leafy green vegetables and other vegetables like okra and broccoli
- **Fill ¼ of your plate** with rice, chapatis, or potatoes
- Prepare food in a small amount of liquid plant oils like olive, canola, corn, safflower, or soybean oils
- To make your food taste creamy, use pureed almonds (or other nut butters) or non-fat yogurt

Heart-Healthy South Asian Meal Ideas

Breakfast

1 cup oatmeal with ½ cup non-fat milk **OR** 2 slices of whole-wheat toast with 2 tsp of almond butter **OR**

1 steamed idli with sambar **OR** 1 cup cracked wheat upma with tomato or mint chutney; 1 fresh fruit; tea or coffee with non-fat or 1% milk

Lunch or Dinner

3 oz. fish or chicken **OR** 1 cup legumes (dal, sambar); 1 cup vegetable curry (bhindi, green beans or lauki); 1 cup mixed vegetable salad with lemon juice; ½ cup non-fat plain yogurt, lassi or raita; 2/3 cup cooked brown rice or 2 small whole-wheat chapatis; 1 TBSP oil (canola, olive, sunflower, or soy bean oil for cooking); 1 serving fresh fruit

Snacks

Unsalted almonds or seeds; fresh vegetables; fresh fruit; ½ cup dry cereal mix (namkeen made with puffed rice, puffed wheat flavored with herbs and spices of your choice)

A registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) can help you make a heart-healthy meal plan that works best for your lifestyle and support you in your nutrition journey.