

Reading Labels

Trying to figure out whether a product is Paleo Approach friendly? It helps to know the many aliases that some pervasive foods go by.

❌ Gluten in Foods

Avoiding gluten can take some effort. Ingredients derived from wheat and other gluten-containing grains are found in a vast array of packaged and manufactured foods, but also in some ingredients not normally considered to be processed foods. The following list includes some of these hidden—and not-so-hidden—sources of gluten.

- Asian rice paper
- atta flour
- bacon (check ingredients)
- barley
- barley grass
- barley malt
- beer (unless gluten-free)
- bleached or unbleached flour
- bran
- bread flour
- breading
- brewer's yeast
- bulgur
- coating mixes
- communion wafers
- condiments
- couscous
- croutons
- dinkle (spelt)
- durum
- einkorn
- emmer (durum wheat)
- farina
- farro (called emmer wheat except in Italy)
- food starch
- French fries
- fu (a dried form of gluten)
- gliadin
- glue used on some envelopes, stamps, and labels
- gluten peptides
- glutenin
- graham
- gravies
- hydrolyzed wheat gluten
- hydrolyzed wheat protein
- ice cream (may contain flour as an anticrystallizing agent)
- imitation fish
- kamut
- lunch meats
- maida (Indian wheat flour)
- malt
- malt vinegar
- marinades
- matzah (aka matso)
- medications (prescription or over the counter)
- mir (a wheat and rye cross)
- nutritional and herbal supplements
- oats
- panko (bread crumbs)
- pilafs (containing orzo)
- prepared foods
- processed cereals (often contain barley malt)
- rye
- salad dressings
- sauces
- seitan
- self-basting poultry
- semolina
- soup bases and bouillon
- soy or rice drinks (barley malt or malt enzymes may be used during manufacturing)
- soy sauce (unless wheat-free)
- spelt
- spice mixes (often contain wheat as an anticaking agent, filler, or thickening agent)
- starch
- stuffings
- syrups
- thickeners
- triticale
- wheat
- wheat bran
- wheat germ
- wheat grass
- wheat starch

Common Sources of Gluten/Wheat Contamination:

- art supplies: paint, clay, glue, and play dough (can be transferred to the mouth if hands aren't washed)
- flour dust
- foods sold in bulk (often contaminated by scoops used in other bins and by flour dust)
- grills, pans, cutting boards, utensils, toasters and other appliances, and oils that have been used for preparing foods containing gluten
- household products (may be transferred to the lips and ingested)
- knives (double-dipping knives into food spreads after spreading on bread can leave gluten-containing crumbs)
- millet, white rice flour, buckwheat flour, sorghum flour, and soy flour (commonly contaminated)
- personal care products, especially shampoos (may be transferred to the lips and ingested)
- powder coating inside rubber gloves (may be derived from wheat)
- waxes or resins on fruits and vegetables

❌ Gluten Cross-Reactors

Some foods have a higher likelihood of cross-reacting with gluten, meaning that the antibodies your body makes against gluten recognize similar proteins in these foods, so your body sees these foods and gluten as being one and the same. While gluten sensitivity doesn't automatically mean that you are sensitive to all or any of these foods, it's prudent to be cautious of them:

- brewer's/baker's/nutritional yeast
- corn
- dairy proteins (casein, casomorphin, butyrophilin, whey)
- instant coffee
- millet
- oats
- potatoes
- rice
- sorghum

☒ Corn in Foods

Ingredients derived from corn can be found in the vast majority of packaged and manufactured foods. If you are very sensitive to corn-derived products, avoiding these pervasive ingredients can be overwhelming. However, avoiding processed foods in general will make a huge difference. You may or may not need to go to the extent of avoiding all traces of corn-derived ingredients (in medications, for example); however, being aware of where corn exposure may be sneaking into your life will help you identify whether it is a problem. The following list includes some hidden—and not-so-hidden—sources of corn.

Ingredients Derived from Corn

- acetic acid
- alcohol
- alpha tocopherol
- artificial flavorings
- artificial sweeteners
- ascorbates
- ascorbic acid
- aspartame
- astaxanthin
- baking powder
- barley malt
- bleached flour
- blended sugar
- brown sugar
- calcium citrate
- calcium fumarate
- calcium gluconate
- calcium lactate
- calcium magnesium acetate (CMA)
- calcium stearate
- calcium stearoyl lactylate
- caramel and caramel color
- carboxymethylcellulose sodium
- cellulose, microcrystalline
- cellulose, powdered
- cetearyl glucoside
- choline chloride
- citric acid
- citrus cloud emulsion (CCS)
- cocoglycerides
- confectioners' sugar
- corn oil
- corn sweetener
- corn sugar
- corn syrup
- corn syrup solids
- cornmeal
- cornstarch
- crosscarmellose sodium
- crystalline dextrose
- crystalline fructose
- cyclodextrin
- datum (dough conditioner)
- decyl glucoside
- decyl polyglucose
- dextrin
- dextrose (also found in IV solutions)
- dextrose anything (such as monohydrate or anhydrous)
- d-Gluconic acid
- distilled white vinegar
- drying agent
- erythorbic acid
- erythritol
- ethanol
- Ethocel 20
- ethylcellulose
- ethyl acetate
- ethyl alcohol
- ethyl lactate
- ethyl maltol
- ethylene
- Fibersol-2
- flavorings
- food starch
- fructose
- fruit juice concentrate
- fumaric acid
- germ/germ meal
- gluconate
- gluconic acid
- glucono delta-lactone
- gluconolactone
- glucosamine
- glucose
- glucose syrup (also found in IV solutions)
- glutamate
- gluten
- gluten feed/meal
- glycerides
- glycerin
- glycerol
- golden syrup
- grits
- hominy
- honey
- hydrolyzed corn
- hydrolyzed corn protein
- hydrolyzed vegetable protein
- hydroxypropyl methylcellulose
- hydroxypropyl methylcellulose
- phthalate (HPMCP)
- inositol
- invert syrup or sugar
- lactate
- lactic acid
- lauryl glucoside
- lecithin
- linoleic acid
- lysine
- magnesium fumarate
- maize
- malic acid
- malonic acid
- malt syrup from corn
- malt, malt extract
- maltitol
- maltodextrin
- maltol
- maltose
- mannitol
- margarine
- methyl gluceth
- methyl glucose
- methyl glucoside
- methylcellulose
- modified cellulose gum
- modified cornstarch
- modified food starch
- molasses (corn syrup may be present; check label)
- mono- and diglycerides
- monosodium glutamate (MSG)
- monostearate
- natural flavorings
- olestra/Olean
- polenta
- polydextrose
- polylactic acid (PLA)
- polysorbates (e.g., Polysorbate 80)
- polyvinyl acetate
- potassium citrate
- potassium fumarate
- potassium gluconate
- powdered sugar
- pregelatinized starch
- propionic acid
- propylene glycol
- saccharin
- salt (iodized)
- semolina (unless from wheat)
- simethicone
- sodium carboxymethylcellulose
- sodium citrate
- sodium erythorbate
- sodium fumarate
- sodium lactate
- sodium starch glycolate
- sodium stearoyl fumarate
- sorbate
- sorbic acid
- sorbitan
- sorbitan monooleate
- sorbitan trioleate
- sorbitol
- sorghum (syrup and/or grain may be mixed with corn)
- Splenda (artificial sweetener)
- starch
- stearic acid
- stearoyls
- sucralose (artificial sweetener)
- sucrose
- sugar
- talc
- threonine
- tocopherol (vitamin E)
- treacle
- triethyl citrate
- unmodified starch
- vanilla, natural flavoring
- vanilla, pure or extract
- vanillin
- vinegar, distilled white
- vinyl acetate
- vitamin C
- vitamin E
- vitamin supplements
- xanthan gum
- xylitol
- yeast
- zea mays
- zein

☒ Soy in Foods

Soy is another ingredient that has permeated the food supply. Soy lecithin and soy protein are especially common ingredients to find in packaged goods. The following list includes foods that are derived from soy:

- bean curd
- bean sprouts
- chocolate (soy lecithin may be used in manufacturing)
- edamame (fresh soybeans)
- hydrolyzed soy protein (HSP)
- kinako
- miso (fermented soybean paste)
- mono- and diglycerides
- monosodium glutamate (MSG)
- natto
- nimame
- okara
- shoyu
- soy albumin
- soy cheese
- soy fiber
- soy flour
- soy grits
- soy ice cream
- soy lecithin
- soy meal
- soy nuts
- soy pasta
- soy protein (concentrate, hydrolyzed, isolate)
- soy sauce
- soy sprouts
- soy yogurt
- soya
- soybean (curds, granules)
- soybean oil
- soymilk
- tamari
- tempeh
- teriyaki sauce
- textured vegetable protein (TVP)
- tofu (dofu, kori-dofu)
- yuba

Potentially Cross-Contaminated Foods Must Be Labeled:

- “may contain soy”
- “produced on shared equipment with soy”
- “produced in a facility that also processes soy”

Products That Commonly Contain Soy

- Asian cuisine (Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Thai)
- baked goods
- baking mixes
- bouillon cubes
- candy
- cereal
- chicken (raw or cooked) processed with chicken broth
- chicken broth
- deli meats
- energy bars
- imitation dairy foods, such as soymilk, vegan cheese, and vegan ice cream
- infant formula
- margarine
- mayonnaise
- meat products with fillers; for example, burgers and sausages
- nutrition bars
- nutrition supplements (vitamins)
- peanut butter and peanut butter substitutes
- protein powders
- sauces, gravies, and soups
- smoothies
- vegetable broth
- vegetarian meat substitutes (veggie burgers, imitation chicken patties, imitation lunch meats, imitation bacon bits)
- waxes or horticultural oils on fruits

☒ Sugar in Foods

When you are reading food labels, it is helpful to know how to decipher which ingredients are sugar. While most of them are refined, some are unrefined (which typically means that the sugar retains some minerals). It is also common for manufactured products to contain more than one form of sugar. The following ingredients are all forms of sugar:

- agave
- agave nectar
- barley malt
- barley malt syrup
- beet sugar
- brown rice syrup
- brown sugar
- cane crystals
- cane juice
- cane sugar
- caramel
- coconut sugar
- corn sweetener
- corn syrup
- corn syrup solids
- crystalline fructose
- date sugar
- dehydrated cane juice
- demerara sugar
- dextrin
- dextrose
- diastatic malt
- evaporated cane juice
- fructose
- fruit juice
- fruit juice concentrate
- galactose
- glucose
- glucose solids
- golden syrup
- high-fructose corn syrup
- honey
- inulin
- invert sugar
- jaggery
- lactose
- malt syrup
- maltodextrin
- maltose
- maple syrup
- molasses
- monk fruit (luo han guo)
- muscovado sugar
- palm sugar
- panela
- panocha
- rapadura
- raw cane sugar
- raw sugar
- refined sugar
- rice bran syrup
- rice syrup
- saccharose
- sorghum
- sorghum syrup
- sucanat
- sucrose
- syrup
- treacle
- turbinado sugar
- yacon syrup


Dairy in Foods

Dairy ingredients are more and more commonly used in manufactured and prepackaged foods. The following ingredients found on a label indicate the presence of milk protein.

- milk — acidophilus milk, buttermilk, buttermilk blend, buttermilk solids, cultured milk, condensed milk, dried milk, dry milk solids (DMS), evaporated milk, fat-free milk, fully cream milk powder, goat's milk, Lactaid milk, lactose-free milk, low-fat milk, malted milk, milk derivative, milk powder, milk protein, milk solids, milk solid pastes, nonfat dry milk, nonfat milk, nonfat milk solids, pasteurized milk, powdered milk, sheep's milk, skim milk, skim milk powder, sour milk, sour milk solids, sweet cream buttermilk powder, sweetened condensed milk, sweetened condensed skim milk, whole milk, 1% milk, 2% milk
- butter — artificial butter, artificial butter flavor, butter extract, butter fat, butter flavored oil, butter solids, dairy butter, natural butter, natural butter flavor, whipped butter
- casein & caseinates — ammonium caseinate, calcium caseinate, hydrolyzed casein, iron caseinate magnesium caseinate, potassium caseinate, sodium caseinate, zinc caseinate
- cheese — cheese flavor (artificial and natural), cheese food, cottage cheese, cream cheese, imitation cheese, vegetarian cheeses with casein
- cream, whipped cream
- curds
- custard
- dairy product solids
- galactose
- ghee (cultured ghee may be OK)
- half & half
- hydrolysates — casein hydrolysate, milk protein hydrolysate, protein hydrolysate, whey hydrolysate, whey protein hydrolysate
- ice cream, ice milk, sherbet
- lactalbumin, lactalbumin phosphate
- lactate solids
- lactic yeast
- lactitol monohydrate
- lactoglobulin
- lactose
- lactulose
- milk fat, anhydrous milk fat
- nisin preparation
- nougat
- pudding
- quark
- recaldent
- rennet, rennet casein
- Simplese (fat replacer)
- sour cream, sour cream solids, imitation sour cream
- whey — acid whey, cured whey, delactosed whey, demineralized whey, hydrolyzed whey, powdered whey, reduced mineral whey, sweet dairy whey, whey powder, whey protein, whey protein concentrate, whey solids
- yogurt (regular or frozen), yogurt powder

May contain milk:

- caramel flavoring
- flavoring
- high-protein flour
- lactic acid
- lactic acid starter culture
- natural flavoring

 "Nondairy" products may contain casein. Foods covered by the FDA labeling laws that contain milk must be labeled "contains milk"; however, prescription and over-the-counter medications are exempt.