

The Everyday Food Guide

See the sugar — and the spike — before you eat.

How to read this

 **Green** go for it ·  **Amber** tweak it ·  **Red** swap it

Spike (SugarCoachIQ™) = how fast it raises your blood sugar — Low / Med / High. Catches foods like white rice: ~0 sugar but a big spike.

Free sugar = added sugar + juice, honey & syrups. Daily target **30g (≈7 cubes 🧊)** · 1 cube ≈ 4g.

The **verdict** reflects **both** — so a food with no sugar can still be red if it spikes you.

Drinks

FOOD	FREE SUGAR	SPIKE	VERDICT	WHY	BETTER SWAP
Coca-Cola (330ml)	35g · 9 🧊	High	Red	Pure free sugar — a fast, big spike	Water, sparkling or diet
Orange juice (250ml)	20g · 5 🧊	High	Red	Free sugar, fibre stripped out	A whole orange (0g free sugar)
Shop smoothie (250ml)	25g · 6 🧊	High	Red	Blended = free sugar, even from fruit	Whole fruit + water
Caramel frappuccino (grande)	67g · 17 🧊	High	Red	A dessert — syrup + whole milk	Flat white, no syrup (~3g)
Hot chocolate (shop)	28g · 7 🧊	High	Red	Sugar + syrup + whole milk	Cocoa + warm milk, no sugar
Latte, whole milk, no syrup	9g · 2 🧊	Low	Amber	Natural milk sugar, nothing added	Smaller size; skip the syrups
Diet cola / sugar-free	0g	Low	Green	No sugar (sweeteners) — fine now and then	—
Black americano / tea	0g	Low	Green	Just coffee or tea	—

Breakfast

FOOD	FREE SUGAR	SPIKE	VERDICT	WHY	BETTER SWAP
Coco Pops (30g)	10g · 2½ 🧊	High	Red	Sugary and refined — a double hit	Porridge oats + berries
"Healthy" granola (50g)	15g · 4 🧊	High	Red	Sugar behind the health halo	Plain oats, add your own fruit
Croissant / pastry	6g · 1½ 🧊	High	Red	Refined flour + sugar + fat	Eggs or Greek yoghurt
White toast (1 slice)	1g	Med	Amber	Barely any sugar, but spikes you	Wholegrain or seeded
Weetabix (2)	2g	Med	Amber	Wholegrain, low sugar; spikes a little	Add berries & yoghurt
Porridge oats (40g)	1g	Low	Green	Slow wholegrain, almost no sugar	—
Greek yoghurt (plain) + berries	5g	Low	Green	Natural sugars only, low spike	—
Bacon & eggs	0g	Low	Green	Protein — no sugar, no spike	—

Mains & sides

FOOD	FREE SUGAR	SPIKE	VERDICT	WHY	BETTER SWAP
White rice (150g cooked)	0g	High	Red	No sugar — but a big blood-sugar spike	Brown/basmati + protein & veg
Chips / fries (150g)	1g	High	Red	Fast starch — a quick spike	Boiled new potatoes, smaller

Pizza (2 slices)	6g · 1½ 🍷	High	Red	Refined base spikes + sugar in the sauce	Thinner base + a side salad
Jacket potato (large)	2g	High	Amber	Big portion of fast starch	Smaller + beans/cheese, or sweet potato
White pasta (180g cooked)	2g	High	Amber	Refined carb — spikes you	Wholewheat, more veg
Burger + white bun	6g · 1½ 🍷	High	Amber	Bun spikes; the sauce adds sugar	Lettuce wrap / open bun
Sushi (6 pieces)	4g · 1 🍷	High	Amber	White rice + sugar mixed into the rice	Sashimi or brown rice
Couscous (150g)	1g	High	Amber	Refined wheat — spikes you	Wholewheat or quinoa
Boiled potato (150g)	1g	Med	Amber	Starch spikes blood sugar	Sweet potato + protein
Sweet potato (150g)	5g	Med	Green	Slower than white potato + fibre	—
Quinoa / bulgur (150g)	1g	Low	Green	Wholegrain, slow-release	—
Lentils / beans (150g)	1g	Low	Green	Slow carb, fibre + protein	—
Chicken / fish / eggs	0g	Low	Green	Protein — no sugar, no spike	—
Broccoli / leafy veg	0g	Low	Green	Barely moves blood sugar	—

Snacks & sweets

FOOD	FREE SUGAR	SPIKE	VERDICT	WHY	BETTER SWAP
Milk chocolate (45g bar)	24g · 6 🍷	Med	Red	Mostly free sugar	A few squares of 70%+ dark
Ice cream (2 scoops)	25g · 6 🍷	Med	Red	Lots of free sugar	A few squares of dark, or berries
Fruit yoghurt (150g)	18g · 4½ 🍷	Low	Red	"Low-fat" but sugar-loaded	Plain Greek yoghurt + berries
Crisps (30g)	1g	High	Amber	Fast starch + fat — little sugar, real spike	Nuts or plain popcorn
Cereal / breakfast bar	12g · 3 🍷	Med	Amber	Sugary despite the healthy look	A small handful of nuts
Rice cakes	0g	High	Amber	Puffed rice — spikes you fast	Oatcakes + nut butter
Salted popcorn (small)	1g	Med	Green	Wholegrain, light snack	—
Nuts (small handful)	1g	Low	Green	Protein + fat — no spike	—
Hummus + veg sticks	2g	Low	Green	Real food, low sugar	—
Dark chocolate (2 sq, 70%)	4g · 1 🍷	Low	Green	Small amount, low sugar	—

Fruit

FOOD	FREE SUGAR	SPIKE	VERDICT	WHY	BETTER SWAP
Berries (strawberry, blueberry...)	0g*	Low	Green	The lowest-sugar fruit — eat freely	—
Apple	0g*	Low	Green	Whole fruit — natural, not free sugar	—
Pear	0g*	Low	Green	Whole fruit, gentle on blood sugar	—
Orange (whole)	0g*	Low	Green	The juice is the problem — not this	—
Kiwi	0g*	Low	Green	Low sugar, big hit of vitamin C	—
Banana	0g*	Low—Med	Green	Fibre slows it; riper = a little more spike	—

Grapes	0g*	Med	Green	Sweet & easy to graze — pair with protein	—
Pineapple	0g*	Med	Green	Sweeter tropical — keep portions sensible	—
Mango	0g*	Med	Green	Sweet — bigger spike, so a smaller portion	—
Watermelon / melon	0g*	Med	Green	Spikes fast, but it's mostly water	—
Avocado	0g	Low	Green	A fruit that's basically healthy fat — no sugar	—
Dried fruit / raisins	0g*	High	Amber	Intrinsic sugar, but very concentrated — easy to overdo	Small handful, with nuts
Dates	0g*	High	Amber	Nature's sweets — concentrated, big spike	1–2, with nuts

* Whole & dried fruit = 0g free sugar — it doesn't count toward your 30g. **Juiced or blended** (juice, smoothie) it becomes free sugar and counts. Dried fruit is concentrated, so it spikes more and is easy to over-eat.

⚠ Hidden sugar surprises

FOOD	FREE SUGAR	SPIKE	VERDICT	WHY	BETTER SWAP
Ketchup (1 tbsp)	4g · 1 🥄	Low	Amber	Sugar in a "savoury" sauce	Mustard, or use less
BBQ / sweet chilli (1 tbsp)	7g · 2 🥄	Low	Amber	Basically a sweet sauce	Use sparingly
Jarred pasta sauce (½ jar)	12g · 3 🥄	Low	Red	Added sugar hiding in the jar	Tinned tomatoes + herbs
Baked beans (½ tin)	10g · 2½ 🥄	Med	Amber	Sweetened tomato sauce	Reduced-sugar version
Tinned / cup soup	8g · 2 🥄	Med	Amber	Hidden sugar + refined starch	Fresh or homemade
Flavoured / vitamin water (500ml)	15g · 4 🥄	High	Red	"Water" that really isn't	Plain or sparkling water
Sports / energy drink	27g · 7 🥄	High	Red	Almost a day's sugar in a bottle	Water; an electrolyte tab

🏷 The many names for sugar

Manufacturers hide sugar under **60+ names** and split it across several so it slips down the ingredients list. Three rules catch most of it:

① Anything ending in **"-ose"** is sugar — glucose, fructose, sucrose, dextrose, maltose, lactose.

② Any **syrup, nectar, juice or "juice concentrate"** is sugar — HFCS, agave nectar, rice syrup, fruit-juice concentrate.

③ **Not sweet ≠ no sugar:** maltodextrin tastes bland but spikes blood sugar faster than table sugar.

The "-ose" family

sucrose · glucose · fructose · dextrose · maltose · lactose · galactose · ribose · trehalose · mannose

Syrups

high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) · glucose-fructose syrup · corn syrup · glucose syrup · golden syrup · maple syrup · agave nectar · brown rice syrup · malt & barley-malt syrup · oat syrup · carob syrup · sorghum syrup · date syrup · tapioca syrup · refiners' syrup

Cane & beet sugars

cane sugar · cane juice · evaporated cane juice · raw sugar · brown sugar · beet sugar · demerara · muscovado · turbinado · panela · caster · icing / confectioner's sugar · invert sugar · sucanat

"Natural"-sounding

honey · coconut sugar · palm sugar · date sugar · maple sugar · molasses · blackstrap molasses · treacle · fruit-juice concentrate · grape / apple juice concentrate · fruit nectar · date paste

Malt & starch-based (spike hard)

maltodextrin · malt · malt extract · dextrin · diastatic malt · ethyl maltol

Also sugar

crystalline fructose · fruit sugar · grape sugar · corn sweetener · caramel · anhydrous dextrose

The splitting trick: if a label lists two or three of these (e.g. sugar + glucose syrup + dextrose), add them together — separately each ranks lower, but combined, sugar is often the main ingredient.

Approximate per-portion values for everyday guidance — close, but not lab-precise. Lifestyle coaching, not medical advice; if you have diabetes or insulin resistance, follow your healthcare team.