

FACTSHEET No. 20

CALORIES IN BREAD

Background

There are over 5.5 million sliced and wrapped loaves sold on average in the UK every day.¹

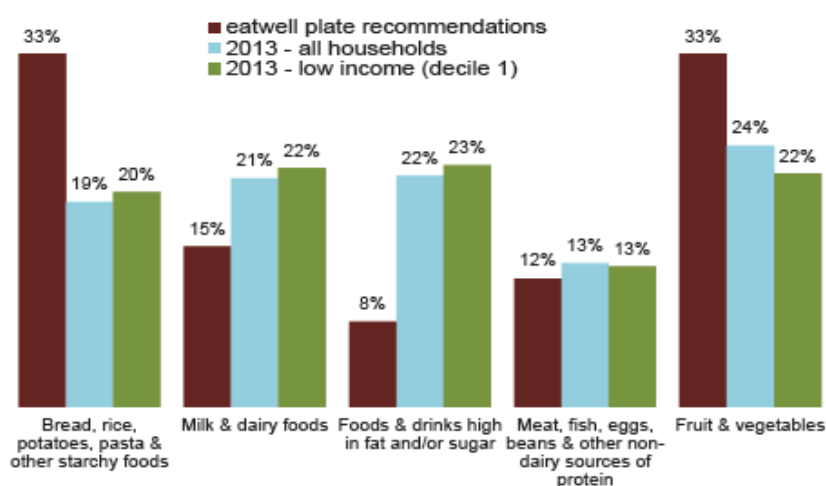
Bread is one of our staple foods and it has been around for thousands of years. It makes an important contribution to the diet and is a great source of carbohydrate.

The National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS)² is a national survey of the dietary habits and nutritional status of the UK population. Results from this survey indicate that bread accounts on average for 11% of adult food energy intake, 10% of protein and nearly 20% of fibre, but only 5% of fat intake.

The results also show that bread provided more than 10% of adult dietary intake of calcium, iron, zinc, magnesium, copper, selenium and B vitamins (thiamin, niacin and folate).

The Government's Eatwell Plate shows the UK food based dietary recommendations. It is a model of the different types of food, and the proportions we should eat them in, to have a well balanced and healthy diet. Bread is included in the Bread, Rice, Potatoes, Pasta and other starchy foods group which are our main source of carbohydrate and should make up about a third of our diet. The Defra Family Food Survey³ (2013) shows that actual intakes are below those recommended.

Chart 3.3: Eatwell plate comparison for low income and all households



¹ Nielsen Total UK Coverage, Unit Sales 52w /e 16.08.14.

² National Diet and Nutrition Survey Nielsen Total UK Coverage 52w/e 06.08.11.

³ Defra Family Food 2013 <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-food-statistics>

Contrary to popular belief, carbohydrates are not fattening - in fact they provide less than half the calories of fat.

Energy, Fat & Sugar Content of Different Types of Bread:

	White (per 100g)	Brown (per 100g)	Wholemeal (per 100g)
Energy	219kcal	207kcal	217kcal
Fat	1.6g	2.0g	2.5g
Total Sugars	3.4g	3.4g	2.8g

McCance and Widdowson Composition of Foods 7th Edition (2014)

A typical slice of bread weighs 38 grams. A slice of white bread typically contains 83kcal and 0.6g of fat, brown bread contains 79kcal and 0.8g of fat and wholemeal contains 82kcal and 1.0g of fat.

Q&A's

How many calories are there in bread?

According to McCance and Widdowson's 'The Composition of Foods'³, an average white bread has 219 calories per 100g compared to an average wholemeal bread at 217 calories per 100g. For a 38g slice of bread this would equate to 83 calories for white and 82 calories for wholemeal.

Is bread fattening?

Being overweight is caused by an imbalance where energy intake (food eaten) exceeds energy expenditure (physical activity). Bread has had some bad press as a result of some of the anti-carb celebrity diet crazes, but it's important to realise that carbohydrates are necessary as part of a healthy balanced diet and can actually help you by keeping you feeling full (and so less likely to snack). Carbohydrates provide fewer calories per gram of food than fat (carbohydrates provide 4kcal per gram, while fat provides 9 kcal per gram).

Most bread in the UK is low in fat and sugars, with less than 3% fat and less than 5% sugars. An average slice of bread has less than 100 calories.

It is important to be careful with choices of spreads and to be smarter with our choices of fillings and toppings as these are what often add to the fat and calorie content. For example, fill sandwiches with lean cuts of meat like chicken breast, fish such as tuna, and add salad.

How much bread should be included in a healthy diet?

Starchy foods, such as bread, potatoes, cereals, rice and pasta, are our main source of carbohydrate and play an important role in a healthy diet. These foods should make up about a third of the food we eat.

Bread, especially wholemeal, malted grain/granary, brown and seeded breads, is a healthy choice to eat as part of a balanced diet.

³ McCance and Widdowson's "The Composition of Foods" 7th Edition (2014).

Wholegrain, wholemeal and brown breads give us energy and contain B vitamins, vitamin E, fibre and a wide range of minerals. White bread also contains a range of vitamins and minerals, and although it has less fibre than whole grain, wholemeal or brown breads, it still has about 2.5% (compared to wholemeal at around 7%).

Are there any lower calorie breads available?

Yes there are a number of bread products available in the UK that have a lower calorie count per slice.