

FACTSHEET No. 8

THE BREAD WE EAT

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Our Daily Bread

Any kind of bread is a nutritious food. In the UK, we eat a wide range of bread products, but white sliced bread is still the most popular. So what kind of bread do we eat?

You can find more than 200 varieties in the shops today. As well as the favourite white sliced loaf, there are brown and wholemeal breads, malted wheats, milk breads, bran-enriched and seeded breads. They come sliced, unsliced, wrapped, unwrapped, part-baked and frozen. There are different shaped breads including the cob, coburg, cottage, cholla, bloomer, barrel, batch, sandwich, tin, vienna and farmhouse. There are continental and ethnic breads, including baguettes and croissants, pitta bread, ciabatta, bagels and naan. The choice is enormous.

All the experts agree we should be eating bread as part of a healthy balanced diet, it is a good source of carbohydrate, fibre, vitamins and minerals and is recommended in the Eatwell Guide recently published by Public Health England. With such a wide variety of breads available and so many meal and snack opportunities it's easy to eat the recommended intake of 250g carbohydrate per day. At the end of this section there are some suggestions on how to do this but first here is a description of some old and new favourite breads.

Types of Bread

There are three basic types of bread; white, brown and wholemeal and all bread can be categorised within one of these types. Bread is available in a whole range of shapes and sizes, crusty or soft crust, wrapped or unwrapped, sliced or unsliced.

White bread is made from flour which contains only the endosperm, or central section of the grain (about 75% of the whole grain). White flour is fortified with calcium, iron, niacin and thiamin.

Wholemeal bread is made from the whole of the wheat grain with nothing removed.

Brown bread is made from flour from which some bran and wheatgerm have been removed and represents about 85% of the whole grain.

Wheatgerm bread is bread containing added cooked wheatgerm of no less than 10%.

Granary breads are brown breads made from special Granary^(R) flour (a trademark of the Hovis brand), which includes kibbled and whole grains of malted wheat.

Malt breads are made with high levels of malt flour to give a distinctive texture and flavour.

Sourdough breads are made from the fermentation of dough using a leaven, they are mildly sour to taste.

Variety

Wrapped and Sliced breads come in lots of varieties. White is the most popular with most sections of the population, particularly children and men. White sliced bread is described as standard or premium and more recently super premium, depending on the grade of flour used to make the bread.

Sandwich Loaf. This can be white or brown bread. It is a tin loaf with a flat top giving even, rectangular slices.

Split Tin. A long, tin-baked loaf giving a large number of small, handy slices.

Farmhouse. A loaf of bread, oval or rectangular in shape with rounded top crust, split and sometimes flour dressed; typically shorted and fatter than a Split Tin.

Batch Loaf. Tall loaves baked without tins by placing them close together in the oven so that the sides touch. They are split apart after baking and have only top and bottom crusts.

Plait. This is an open-baked plaited white loaf, often topped with poppy seeds.

Coburg. A crusty dome-shaped loaf, open-baked with two cuts on top to form a crown.

Cob. A round loaf made from either wholemeal or white flour. It is often made from a combination of brown and white flours for a light colour and texture and usually has a sprinkling of crushed wheat on top.

Bloomer. A crusty loaf popular in London and the South East. It is slashed diagonally several times across the top for maximum crustiness. Sometimes called a Twist.

Vienna. Is a white baton shaped loaf usually enriched with milk. It has a glazed, crisp crust and is often topped with poppy seeds.

Cottage. This white loaf is easily recognisable with its two round sections. It is believed to date back to Roman times when it was invented to fully utilise the height of the oven.

Barrel. This loaf is also known as a Pistol, Piston, Rasp, Lodger's or Landlady's Loaf or a Crinkled Musket. It is cylindrical and baked in a ridged tin making it easy to slice.

Ethnic and Speciality Breads

The popularity of ethnic and speciality breads such as ciabatta, pitta, naan, cholla and rye breads has increased enormously in recent years. These varieties are now widely available in all parts of the country and can also command a much higher price than standard breads. Although sales are growing, this remains a small sector of the bread market with a high proportion of consumption still being concentrated in London and the South.

Pitta is a flat bread from Greece and the Middle East. It is the biggest selling ethnic bread in the UK. Generally made from white flour but it can be made with wholemeal. Pitta bread is usually oval in shape and can form a pocket for fillings.

Naan is a bread made from white flour which is lightly leavened by a natural yeast starter developed from airborne yeasts. Naan is traditionally cooked in a Tandoor oven.

Chapattis, Paratas and Roti are flat breads, varieties of which can be found throughout India, the Middle and Far East and the Caribbean. In fact, almost every country in the world has a variety of flat bread such as the Mexican tortilla, pancakes, etc.

Ciabatta is a crusty flat white bread with large holes in the dough that looks like a slipper (the name is Italian for 'old slipper'). The essential ingredient of **Ciabatta** is virgin olive oil.

Focaccia is a soft light Italian bread made with white flour and olive oil. Flavourings such as herbs, garlic, sun-dried tomatoes or olives are frequently added.

Baguette or French Stick is a long white baton loaf made with special flour. It is very crusty with diagonal cuts made on top before baking. Baguettes stale very quickly and in France they were traditionally purchased once or twice a day, with leftovers being used for soups and stews.

Soda Bread is an Irish bread using baking soda and soured or buttermilk instead of yeast. Brown soda bread can be made using wholemeal flour.

Rye Breads come from Germany and Scandinavia and are made from Rye flour. Rye flour makes very dense bread, so wheat flour is often added to lighten the loaf. Scandinavian versions traditionally add caraway seeds.

Cholla is a braided Jewish bread loaf traditionally eaten on the Sabbath and at festival times. It is enriched with butter and eggs to give a creamy coloured crumb and a very fine texture.

Bagels are rolls with a hole and are golden brown and crusty on the outside and tender on the inside. They are primarily associated with Jewish culture but are now widely available.

‘Wrap’ or Flour Tortillas. Originally associated with Mexican food, these flexible flat bread products are one of the most recent innovations in the market, which are used to ‘wrap’ around a variety of sandwich fillings.

Sandwich Thins. These are flat, thin rolls, usually square with minimal crust.

In addition to the above ethnic and speciality breads, there are a wide variety of exotic breads with sun-dried tomatoes, basil, garlic, olives and onions and other flavours.

Bakery Snacks (Morning Goods)

Morning goods are traditionally sold in the morning for consumption on the day they are baked. Modern technology, ingredients and packaging have improved the keeping quality of these products and now they can be purchased for consumption at any time of the day, or the next!

Some traditional British products include: rolls and baps, toasting products such as muffins, crumpets and pikelets, scones, teacakes, buns and other fruited products, hot plate products such as pancakes and griddle scones, waffles and potato cakes and not forgetting seasonal products such as hot cross buns.

Newer products include croissants, brioches, pain-au-chocolat, bagels, American sweet muffins and other semi-sweet bread products.