

Foods High in Iron: Cheat Sheet

Iron per serving for common whole foods, daily needs, and simple ways to absorb more.

Food	Type	Serving	Iron	%DV
Oysters (cooked)	Animal	3 oz (85 g)	7.8 mg	43%
Lentils (boiled)	Plant	1 cup (198 g)	6.6 mg	37%
Chickpeas (boiled)	Plant	1 cup (164 g)	4.7 mg	26%
Kidney beans (boiled)	Plant	1 cup (177 g)	3.9 mg	22%
Black beans (boiled)	Plant	1 cup (172 g)	3.6 mg	20%
Edamame (prepared)	Plant	1 cup (155 g)	3.5 mg	20%
Tofu, firm (calcium-set)	Plant	½ cup (126 g)	3.4 mg	19%
Dark chocolate 70-85%	Plant	1 oz (28 g)	3.3 mg	19%
Spinach (boiled)	Plant	½ cup (90 g)	3.2 mg	18%
Quinoa (cooked)	Plant	1 cup (185 g)	2.8 mg	15%
Sardines, canned in oil	Animal	3 oz (85 g)	2.5 mg	14%
Pumpkin seeds (dried)	Plant	1 oz (28 g)	2.5 mg	14%
Beef, 90% lean (cooked)	Animal	3 oz (85 g)	2.4 mg	13%
Oats, dry (not fortified)	Plant	½ cup (40 g)	1.7 mg	9%
Cashews (dry roasted)	Plant	1 oz (28 g)	1.7 mg	9%
Tahini	Plant	2 tbsp (30 g)	1.3 mg	7%
Chicken breast (roasted)	Animal	3 oz (85 g)	0.9 mg	5%
Salmon, Atlantic (cooked)	Animal	3 oz (85 g)	0.3 mg	2%

Daily needs (RDA, NIH ODS)

Men 19+ / Women 51+	8 mg
Women 19-50	18 mg
Pregnancy	27 mg
Breastfeeding 19+	9 mg
Vegetarians	about 1.8x the RDA

Absorb more

- ✓ Pair plant iron with vitamin C: peppers, citrus, tomatoes, strawberries, broccoli.
- ✓ Heme iron (meat, fish, poultry) is absorbed more readily.
- ✓ Have tea or coffee between meals, not with them.
- ✓ Calcium supplements can reduce iron absorption; space them out.

Cautions

Do not take iron supplements unless a clinician recommends them. Adult upper limit: 45 mg/day. Keep iron supplements away from children; overdose is dangerous. Fatigue has many causes, so a blood test is the way to know.

Values from USDA FoodData Central (SR Legacy); %DV based on 18 mg. Estimates vary by brand and cooking.
Full guide: healatlasc.com/healthy-foods/iron-rich-foods