

Corn-Free Diet

Eating corn-free might seem daunting, but we hope to make it easier with this guide. Corn is an ingredient that is seemingly in everything. While it is in many different foods, there are lots of corn-free options out there.

Let's start with ingredients to **avoid**:

- Corn flour, cornmeal, corn gluten, etc.
- Cornstarch (may also be known as starch or vegetable starch)
- Corn oil
- Corn syrup
- High Fructose Corn Syrup
- Dextrins
- Maltodextrins
- Dextrose
- Fructose or crystalline fructose
- Hydrol, treacle
- Ethanol
- Free fatty acids
- Maize
- Vegetable oil, vegetable gum, vegetable starch, vegetable paste, vegetable protein
- Zein
- Popcorn
- Grits
- Hominy
- Corn sugars (Dyno, Cerelose, Puretose, Sweetose, Glucose, etc.)
- Margarine
- Corn chips
- Corn fritters
- Corn cereal, cornflakes
- Corn tortillas
- Polenta

This list is not exhaustive and there are more foods with corn ingredients out there. These are common corn products and by-products.

An ingredient to look out for is **high fructose corn syrup**. It is cheaper than cane sugar so many companies use it in place of sugar. It is in lots of processed snacks, candies, juices, sodas, and more. High fructose corn syrup and the other sweeteners and ingredients listed above are crucial to look out for when eating.

Some foods have a higher likelihood of having corn in the ingredients. Not all of these foods will contain corn, but they should be consumed with caution.

Here are some of them:

- Alcohol
- Artificial colors and flavors

- Artificial sweeteners
- Asian foods
- Baked goods
- Baking mixes
- Baking powder
- Breaded and/or fried foods
- Breads and bagels
- Breakfast foods
- Cheese
- Chocolate
- Confectioner's sugar
- Desserts
- English muffins
- Frosting and icing
- Gluten-free products
- Gravy
- Gum
- Gummy snacks and candies
- Hispanic foods
- Ice cream and other frozen treats
- Jams and jellies
- Marshmallow
- Pancake syrup (not maple syrup)
- Peanut butter
- Pickled foods
- Pizza (fresh and frozen)
- Processed meats
- Processed snacks (cookies, crackers, chips, etc.)
- Sauces and condiments
- Shortening
- Soda and juices
- Soup (especially vegetable)
- Spices
- Vinegar
- Yeast

There are more foods than the ones included on this list that contain corn. There are also foods on this list that may not contain corn. It varies between companies and manufacturers. Corn could potentially be in any food you would eat in a given day. This is why it is so important to **read the ingredients!** Check them twice if you have to, and make sure you know the names of those sneaky corn by-products. If a product says "May contain: Corn", it is not safe to consume. This means it has most likely been subject to "cross-contamination" or "cross-contact". This is where a product that is free of corn comes into trace contact with corn ingredients. It is important to avoid cross-contamination when following this diet.

Corn by-products can also make an appearance in medications and vitamins. Make sure to check the ingredients list if over the counter, and check with the pharmacist for prescriptions. Another way to check a medication's ingredients is on this website:

<https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/>

Corn may also make an appearance in household items as well. Certain plastics and packaging can contain corn. Latex or nitrile gloves may be coated in corn starch. Cleaning products, cosmetics, and body products may also contain corn ingredients.

If you are ever unsure about the corn-free status of any product or food, feel free to contact the manufacturer or the company directly if answers cannot be found online.

It may seem like a lot of foods contain corn, but there are still plenty of corn-free options. There are also substitutes for a lot of corn ingredients.

Here are some suggestions:

- Lemon juice instead of vinegar
- Rice syrup or agave instead of corn syrup
- Rice or arrowroot starch instead of cornstarch
- Sodas and juices made with cane sugar instead of high fructose corn syrup
- Oils like grapeseed or avocado instead of vegetable oil
- Butter instead of margarine
- Baking soda mixed with cream of tartar instead of baking powder

Pinterest and google are great resources for finding corn-free recipes and products.

Make sure you always check the ingredients!

Helpful links:

<https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/childrens-hospital/nutrition/corn-free.aspx>

<https://lacrosseallergy.com/what-to-expect/diet-and-nutrition-counseling-services/allergen-free-diets/corn-free-diets/>

<https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/>

Revised October 2022, Meghan Swope.