

Iron rich Indian foods ready reckoner¹

Food Group	Sources	Quantity of iron (mg) per 100g edible portion
Cereals	Amaranth seeds (rajgira)	8
	Bajra	6.4
	Whole wheat	4
	Jowar	4
	Ragi	4.6
	Multi grain mix (wheat, jowar, bajra, ragi)	4
Pulses	Soya granules/chunks	20
	Bengal gram (roasted channa)	9.5
	Horse gram (kulthi)	8.7
	Lentil (masoor dal)	7.6
	Kidney beans (rajma)	6.1
	Bengal gram (channa)	6.7
	Black gram (urad dal)	4.7
Green Leafy Vegetables	Cowpea leaves	20.1
	Dill leaves (shepu)	17.4
	Malabar spinach (mayalu)	10
	Green amaranth Leaves (chawli)	4.6
	Red amaranth leaves (laal maat)	7.3
	Drumstick leaves (sahajan patte)	4.6
Non- veg	Animal liver (chicken, goat)	6.3
	Egg	1.8
Food Group	Sources	Quantity of iron (mg) in 10g (2 tsp)
Nuts and Seeds	Niger seeds (kalonji/kala jeera)	1.8
	Garden cress seeds (halim)	1.7
	Black sesame seeds (kala Til)	1.4
	Watermelon seeds	0.74
	Black raisins	0.68
	Cashew nuts	0.6
	Almonds	0.5

Source – Nutritive Value of Indian foods, ICMR, 2017

Tips to consider for better iron absorption:

- Pair iron-rich vegetarian food options with vitamin-C-rich foods like amla, lemon for better iron absorption.²
- Heme iron (non-veg sources) is more bioavailable than non-heme iron. Make sure to include the non-veg iron sources if you consume it.³
- Having excess tea/coffee can hinder with iron absorption as they contain tannins.^{4,5}
- Excess washing of leafy vegetables leaches away folic acid. Folate helps in iron absorption. Hence don't indulge in excess washing.⁶

Hb: Hemoglobin; RDA: Recommended Dietary Allowances.
References :
1. Indian Food Composition Tables . National Institute of Nutrition. 2017
2. Kamp F, Jandel D, Hoenicke I, et al. Food and nutrition bulletin. 2003;24(3_suppl_1):S20-6
3. Harvard School of Public Health. Available at: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/iron/>
4. Petroski W, et al. Nutrients. 2020;12(10):2929.
5. Platel K. et al. Crit Rev Food Sci Nutr. 2015;56(10):1608–1619
6. Delchier N, Ringling C, Le Grandois J, et al. Food Chem. 2013;139(1-4):815-824.