

What are Probiotics?

Probiotics are beneficial forms of gut bacteria that help stimulate the natural digestive juices and enzymes that keep our digestive organs functioning properly. In addition to taking a [probiotic supplement](#), you can also eat probiotic foods that are a host to these live bacterium.

We all know of the great [health benefits of probiotics](#), however, not all of us know how to take advantage of these health benefits. Below is a list I put together to outline the best probiotic foods for you to add to your diet. I would also recommend buying the organic version of all these probiotic-rich foods.

Probiotic Foods to Add to Your Diet

1. Yogurt

One of the best probiotic foods is live-cultured yogurt, especially handmade. Look for brands made from [goat's milk](#) that have been infused with extra forms of probiotics like lactobacillus or acidophilus. Goat's milk and cheese are particularly high in probiotics like thermophilus, bifidus, bulgaricus and acidophilus. Be sure to read the ingredients list, as not all yogurt is made equally. Many popular brands are filled with [high fructose corn syrup](#), [artificial sweeteners](#) and artificial flavors and are way too close to being a nutritional equivalent of sugary, fatty ice cream.

2. Kefir

Similar to yogurt, this fermented dairy product is a unique combination of goat's milk and fermented kefir grains. High in lactobacilli and bifidus bacteria, kefir is also rich in [antioxidants](#). Look for a good, organic version at your local health food shop.

3. Sauerkraut

Made from fermented cabbage (and sometimes other vegetables), sauerkraut is not only extremely rich in healthy live cultures, but might also help with reducing allergy symptoms. Sauerkraut is also rich in vitamins B, A, E and C.

4. Dark Chocolate

Probiotics can be added to high-quality dark chocolate, up to four times the amount of probiotics as many forms of dairy. This is only one of the [health benefits of chocolate](#).

5. Microalgae

This refers to super-food ocean-based plants such as spirulina, chlorella, and blue-green algae. These probiotic foods have been shown to increase the amount of both Lactobacillus and bifidobacteria in the digestive tract. They also offer the most amount of energetic return, per ounce, for the human system.

6. Miso Soup



Miso is one the main-stays of traditional Japanese medicine and is commonly used in macrobiotic cooking as a digestive regulator. Made from fermented rye, beans, rice or barley, adding a tablespoon of miso to some hot water makes an excellent, quick, probiotic-rich soup, full of lactobacilli and bifidus bacteria.

Beyond its important live cultures, miso is extremely nutrient-dense and believed to help neutralize the effects of environmental pollution, alkalinize the body and stop the effects of carcinogens in the system.

7. Pickles

Believe it or not, the common green pickle is an excellent food source of probiotics. Try making your own home-made pickles in the sun.

8. Tempeh

A great substitute for meat or tofu, tempeh is a fermented, probiotic-rich grain made from soy beans. A great source of vitamin B12, this vegetarian food can be sauteed, baked or eaten crumbled on salads. If prepared correctly, tempeh is also very low in salt, which makes it an ideal choice for those on a low-sodium diet.

9. Kimchi

An Asian form of pickled sauerkraut, kimchi is an extremely spicy and sour fermented cabbage, typically served alongside meals in Korea. Besides beneficial bacteria, Kimchi is also a great source of beta-carotene, [calcium](#), iron and vitamins A, C, B1 and B2. Kimchi is one of the best probiotic foods you can add to your diet, assuming you can handle the spice, of course.

10. Kombucha Tea

[Kombucha is a form of fermented tea](#) that contains a high amount of healthy gut bacteria. This probiotic drink has been used for centuries and is believed to help increase your energy, enhance your well being and maybe even help you lose weight. However, kombucha tea may not be the best fit for everyone, especially those that have had problems with candida.