



Food Pairing for IBS

A Quirky Guide to
Gut Health





Disclaimer

I'm not a doctor, just someone who's been on a gut-healing journey. This is my personal experience and what works for me, so always consult with a healthcare professional if you have serious concerns.

Step 1

RESISTANT STARCHES - (Friend or Foe for IBS?)

Let's talk about resistant starches—the rebels of the carb world. Unlike regular starches that break down like obedient little molecules in the small intestine, these bad boys take a detour straight to the large intestine. Once there, they become a gourmet feast for your gut bacteria—an all-you-can-eat buffet for your microbiome.

Now, here's where things get... gassy. Fermentation makes resistant starches great for gut health, but it also produces gas. For most people, this is just a normal pit stop on the digestive highway—gas enters, gas exits, no big deal. But if you're an IBS warrior, slow motility can trap that gas, turning what should be a gut-healing process into a bloating, distention, and gut-sensitivity nightmare.

It's all about strategy-

Resistant starches aren't something you just toss into your diet like a rogue science experiment—unless you enjoy playing digestive roulette. Instead, ease in slowly. Start small and let your gut weigh in before going all in.

Also, temperature matters—big time. When certain starches are cooked and cooled, their structure changes, boosting their resistant starch content. Translation? Cold potatoes, leftover rice, and day-old lentils pack more gut-friendly benefits than their freshly cooked versions. That means potato salad > hot baked potato when it comes to digestion. Moral of the story? Yesterday's leftovers = today's gut-friendly gold.

And now for the plot twist—food pairing matters-

Pair resistant starches with the wrong foods, and you're basically inviting digestive drama. Stick to lean proteins or non-starchy veggies (steamed zucchini, I see you). Avoid sugar like that one ex who keeps texting at midnight—it fuels cravings and throws your gut into chaos.

Your gut's already been through enough. Let's not make it a war zone. 🌪️🔥

Step 2

The 4-Day Sugar Challenge (Are You Up for It?)

Note: Coffee and IBS

Coffee's acidity and caffeine can wreak havoc on your digestive tract, triggering bloating, cramps, or an unplanned sprint to the bathroom.

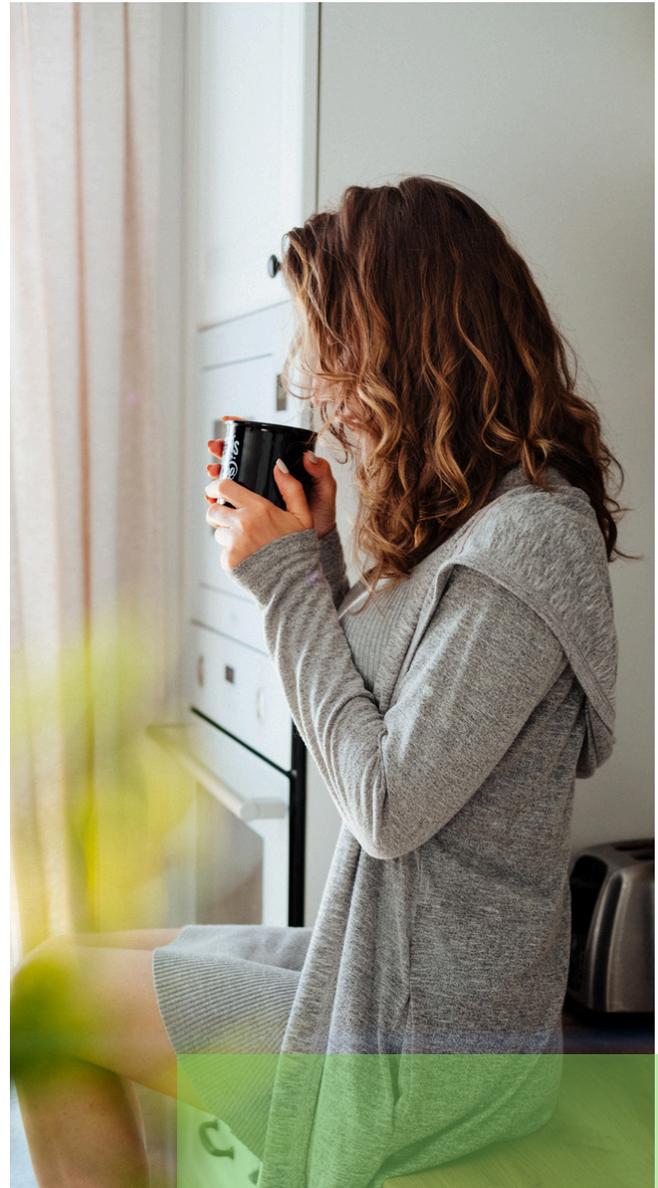
If you have IBS, coffee + sugar = double trouble. Ouch. But if quitting coffee feels like too much right now, start with the sugar.

For the next four days, go completely sugar-free—no sneaky spoonfuls, no “just a little.” If plain coffee feels too harsh, try adding cinnamon, vanilla, or a splash of cashew milk for flavor. Then, on day five, if you're curious, add sugar back in and see what happens. If your gut throws a fit, you'll know exactly who the troublemaker is.

But if you're ready to kick coffee altogether, I promise you will be okay. It might take a little time to adjust, but trust me, it's worth it for your gut's recovery. And the best part? Natural energy will come back—no caffeine crash necessary.

The less sugar (and eventually coffee) you consume, the less your body craves it—leading to happier digestion in the long run. This is step one in taming the sugar monster. Once you've got that down, you can think about gradually parting ways with coffee or easing into a gentler alternative, like mushroom coffee.

But for now? Baby steps. 🧑🍳



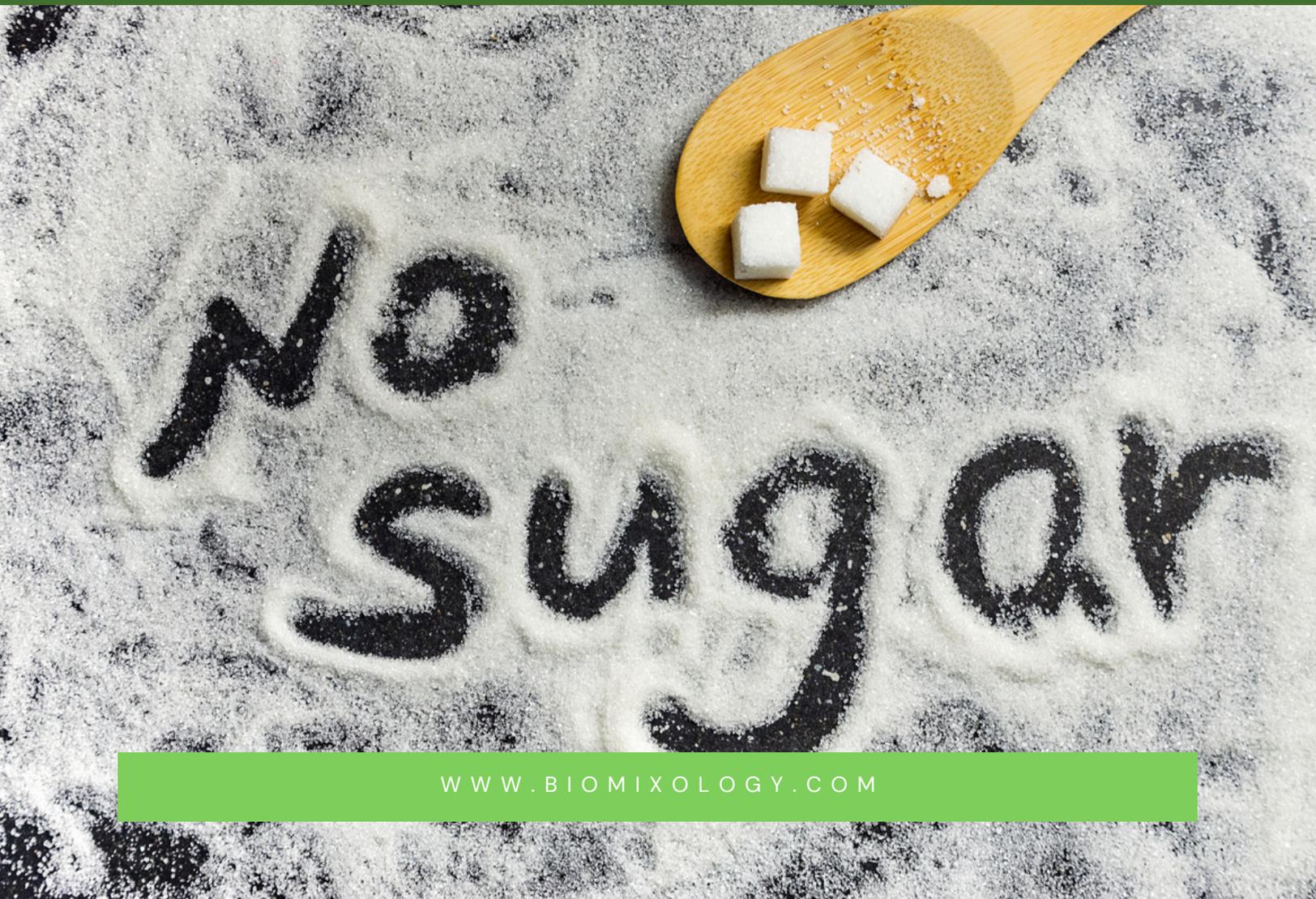
My Morning Routine: How I Ditched Coffee and Cut 90% of Sugar from My Life

Five years ago, I made the decision to quit coffee and drastically reduce sugar, and let me tell you—it was a game-changer for my gut. Back then, my mornings started with a caffeine jolt and a sugar rush, which only fueled my IBS symptoms. I knew something had to change, so I took the leap.

Now, my morning ritual is all about nourishing my gut, not wrecking it. I start my day with hot water, freshly grated ginger, turmeric, and a squeeze of lime or lemon—simple, warming, and great for digestion. Then, around 10 a.m., I enjoy my homemade chia latte with fresh cashew milk. No sugar, no crashes, just steady energy and happy digestion.

Quitting coffee and cutting out most sugar wasn't easy, but my gut health, energy levels, and overall well-being have never been better. If you're not ready to give up coffee yet, start small—ditch the sugar first and see how you feel. Baby steps lead to big changes!

I promise you that getting off sugar and easing off coffee is a big part of the puzzle for healing.



Step 3

Food Pairing Principles: Keep It Simple & Balanced

My eating is clean and balanced, and it took time to get here. But trust me—my gut feels amazing, and digestion is smooth and on point. My gut feels like it's mending every day.

Spices can be a double-edged sword when it comes to IBS. While they can add flavor and health benefits, some can trigger flare-ups or irritate your digestive system. I added a simple breakdown of common spices and their potential impact on IBS on the last page.

If you've ever wondered why you bloat after eating a salad, the answer might be in those leafy greens—and the dressing you're using. Raw greens like spinach, kale, and arugula come with their natural defense mechanisms—antinutrients like saponins and lectins—that help protect them from pests but can irritate your digestive system. In those with IBS, these compounds can cause inflammation, disrupt digestion, and, yes, lead to that dreaded bloating.

And then there's the salad dressing—especially those packed with fat, sugar, or acidic ingredients—that can further upset the balance in your gut. So, if you're sensitive to these, cooking your greens and opting for a lighter dressing might be the trick to sidestep that uncomfortable feeling.



That's why I sauté all my gut-friendly veggies. Cooking helps break down those phytochemicals, making the greens easier to digest. Spinach, kale, and chard all contain these antinutrients, but by sautéing or steaming them, you can reduce their impact on your gut, and keep digestion smooth and bloat-free.

I keep raw leafy greens to a handful in my meals—any more, and they can lead to bloating. I sauté all my gut-friendly veggies because many leafy greens have a natural defense mechanism called phytochemicals or antinutrients, such as saponins and lectins, which can help protect them from pests. While these compounds are great for the plant, they can irritate the human digestive system, especially in those with IBS, by causing inflammation or disrupting digestion. Cooking helps to break down these compounds, making the greens easier to digest.

For example, spinach, kale, and chard are all known to contain these antinutrients, and sautéing or steaming them reduces their impact on your gut.

The key? Keep your plate light yet nourishing. Focus on whole, gut-friendly foods that fuel your body without overwhelming it.

Potatoes, grains, and legumes should be eaten alone, and it's important to allow 4–6 hours for your body to process them properly. This gives your digestive system time to work without being overloaded. It's a simple approach that supports digestion and keeps things running smoothly.

Now, let's get serious about pairing. If you want to make your gut sing with joy, balance is key. Avoid pairing heavy starches (like potatoes) with heavy proteins (like steak). Think of your plate like a marriage: heavy + heavy = a recipe for disaster. Instead, keep your plate light and heavy.



Here's a quick breakdown of foods to pair (and avoid):

The Heavies (Resistant Starches)

- Potatoes (cooked and cooled)
- Rice (cooled)
- Lentils - Grains (soaked and cooked) Eat Alone
- Chickpeas (small portions)

The Balancers (Gut-Friendly Pairings)

- Spinach (cooked or sautéed)
- Zucchini (steamed or roasted)
- Cucumbers (raw) - Great for Hydration
- Carrots (raw or cooked)

Heavy Starches vs. Light Non-Starchy Veggies

- ½ Potatoes + lean protein like chicken or fish
- ½ Cup Grains + non-starchy veggies like grilled carrots and zucchini
- Avoid having meat + heavy potatoes together. Trust me—your gut will thank you later



Recipes for Gut Harmony

Now, let's get practical. Here are some recipes that respect your gut's delicate balance:

Breakfast: Light Veggie Bowl



Ingredients:

- 1 small zucchini (diced)
- 1 small carrot (grated)
- 1 handful spinach (optional)
- 1 egg (poached or scrambled lightly)
- Olive oil for cooking – Salt & Pepper to Taste

Instructions:

- Sauté zucchini and carrot in olive oil until softened.
- Add spinach and cook until wilted.
- Poach or scramble the egg and serve over veggies. Salt & Pepper to Taste

Lunch: Tangy Lentil Salad



Ingredients:

- Soaked and cooked lentils
- Handful of arugula
- Diced cucumbers
- Shredded carrots
- Olive oil and apple cider vinegar

Instructions:

- Mix lentils, arugula, cucumbers, and carrots.
- Drizzle with olive oil and vinegar.
- Top with fresh parsley. Salt & Pepper to Taste

Dinner: Beef Stir-Fry



Ingredients:

- 1/2 lb lean beef (sliced)
- 1 bell pepper (sliced)
- 1-2 heads bok choy (sliced)
- 1 tsp grated ginger
- 1 tbsp sesame oil

Instructions:

- Stir-fry beef in sesame oil.
- Add bell pepper, bok choy, and ginger. Salt & Pepper To Taste
- Serve warm.

Spices can be a bit of a double-edged sword when it comes to IBS. While they can add flavor and health benefits to meals, some can trigger flare-ups or irritate your digestive system. Here's a breakdown of common spices and how they might affect IBS:

1.

Garlic: Raw garlic can be a gut rebel, especially for those with IBS. It's rich in fructans (a type of FODMAP) which can be hard to digest and may cause bloating, gas, and discomfort. Cooking garlic can reduce its impact, so if you're sensitive, try using it sparingly or opt for garlic-infused oils.



2.

Onions: Much like garlic, onions contain fructans and are often a culprit in IBS flare-ups. They're a major player in the high-FODMAP category, and eating them raw can irritate your gut. Cooking them can help, but it's still best to go light on them if you're prone to digestive issues.



3.

Chili Peppers (Capsaicin): While spicy food can be tempting, chili peppers can irritate your gut lining and trigger IBS symptoms, especially for those with a sensitive stomach. Capsaicin (the compound that makes peppers hot) can lead to heartburn, cramps, or diarrhea in some IBS sufferers, so it's best to avoid heavy doses.



4.

Cumin: Cumin is generally safe and even beneficial for digestion, as it can promote the production of digestive enzymes. However, in large amounts, it could still cause discomfort for some people, so moderation is key.



5.

Turmeric: Good news here! Turmeric is usually safe and can be very soothing for the digestive system. Its anti-inflammatory properties make it a great addition to an IBS-friendly diet. Just be mindful of the amounts you're using—excessive doses may still cause irritation in some.



6.

Ginger: Another win for IBS! Ginger is often recommended for easing nausea and calming digestive upset. It's great for reducing bloating and improving motility. You can even use fresh ginger or ginger tea to soothe your gut.



7.

Cinnamon: Cinnamon is a gentle spice and usually well-tolerated by most people with IBS. It's even thought to have anti-inflammatory benefits. But in excess, it could still cause some irritation for sensitive stomachs, so just sprinkle it lightly.



The key to using spices when you have IBS is moderation and paying attention to your body's cues. Cooking spices can sometimes reduce their intensity, making them gentler on your digestion. Keep experimenting to see which spices work for you and which ones don't!



Conclusion

In conclusion, taking care of your gut isn't about cutting out all greens or avoiding flavor —it's about making informed choices based on your biomixology, the science of how food and digestion interact with your microbiome. By understanding how certain foods, like raw leafy greens, affect digestion and making simple adjustments (like cooking your veggies or choosing lighter dressings), you can enjoy the benefits of nourishing, gut-friendly meals without the uncomfortable side effects. Your gut is unique, so listen to it, make the necessary tweaks, and fuel it with foods that support your health. Small changes can make a big difference in how you feel, and with Biomixology as a guide, you're giving your microbiome exactly what it needs to thrive.