

Non-Dairy Beverage Label Claims



Non-dairy milk alternatives or substitutes do not currently have a defined standard of identity and do not meet the standards for milk. These alternatives are often plant-based. Individuals have various reasons for consuming non-dairy milk alternatives over dairy milk, including allergies, lactose intolerance, cultural practices, dietary choice and flavor preference. Nutrition is highly variable based on the plant and processing. Water is often a main ingredient in these beverages. Nut, grain and other plant-based beverages are not nutritionally equivalent to dairy milk. Most are fortified with calcium and other vitamins and minerals.

In comparison, dairy milk is defined as "the lacteal secretion, practically free from colostrum, obtained by the complete milking of one or more healthy cows, which may be clarified and may be adjusted by separating part of the fat therefrom; concentrated milk, reconstituted milk, and dry whole milk" (FDA).

Non-dairy beverages from a variety of plant-based sources



Almond - made from ground almonds and water; contains very little protein; high in vitamin E; alternative for those with soy allergies



Cashew - strained beverage of blended water-soaked cashews and water; creamy taste and texture with no saturated fat or cholesterol; low protein



Coconut - condensed coconut milk diluted with water; very little protein; relatively high potassium



Flax - flax seed oil combined with water, thickeners and emulsifiers; very little protein; high content of omega-3 fatty acids



Hemp - made from hulled hemp seeds and water; generally consumed by people who can't have gluten, nuts and or soy; naturally contains more protein than other non-dairy alternatives (still much less than dairy milk); rich in omega-3 fatty acids



Oat - made from oats; low in calories, cholesterol and fat; higher fiber than other non-dairy alternatives; higher protein than most other milk alternatives; high in carbohydrates because of natural sugars

Pea - made from milled yellow pea flour protein and water that is gaining popularity because its taste and consistency is very similar to dairy milk; naturally high protein



Peanut - nutrients and flavor are extracted from peanuts to produce a beverage that is lower in protein, potassium and phosphorus than dairy milk; good source of vitamin E, magnesium and vitamin B6



Potato - high in carbohydrates and low in protein; good option for people with soy or nut allergies; sold in powdered form and is not readily available; good source of calcium and iron



Rice - most often made from boiled brown rice and brown rice starch; may be the most hypoallergenic choice of all alternative options; very little protein; calories primarily from carbohydrates



Soy - made by soaking, crushing, cooking and straining soybeans; appeared in the U.S. in the 1950's as the first alternative for dairy milk; the only alternative with same amount of protein as dairy milk



The list of non-dairy milk alternatives is growing. Some others include hazelnut, pistachio, quinoa, teff, sesame, spelt, sunflower, and walnut.

For more information, visit [MSU Extension's Food Label Claims page](https://www.canr.msu.edu/tag/food-label-claims)

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