



which milk alternative?

Whether you are allergic to dairy, lactose intolerant or simply want to consume less cholesterol and animal fats, making the right choice of milk alternative is important. Not all are a nutritionally adequate replacement, despite claims such as "excellent alternative to dairy milk."



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However, so long as the product has adequate amounts of nutrients consumers would otherwise expect from dairy milk, I believe such claims are not misleading. These nutrients include protein, calcium, vitamin B₁₂, riboflavin and vitamin A.

how do they rate?

Soy milk. Many brands now contain added calcium, but only some, such as So Good, have the range of nutrients mentioned above, considered important in dairy milk. It is particularly misleading for certain brands to call themselves "milk alternatives," since they contain no or very low levels of these nutrients.

Rice milk. A few brands are enriched with calcium, an imported brand contains a range of added nutrients you would receive from dairy, while other brands are low in these nutrients including protein (just 0.1-0.6 g protein per 100 ml) and should be considered as "drinks only."

Oat milk. Despite claiming to be a non-dairy alternative, the one brand sold in supermarkets is lacking in important nutrients supplied by dairy milk.

Almond milk. An imported brand rightly calls itself a drink (it is low in protein, fibre, calcium, riboflavin, vitamin A) and has no vitamin B₁₂.

what to look for

Check the nutrition information panel on packaging. If a claim such as "calcium rich" is made, by law the calcium content must be stated. Alternatives to dairy milk should supply around 300 mg calcium per 250 ml serving to provide similar levels.

Check if the milk has been enriched with other nutrients supplied by dairy, including vitamin B₁₂, riboflavin and vitamin A, and contains adequate amounts of protein (at least 3 g/100 ml). This is important if you are vegetarian or vegan, since these nutrients may be lacking.

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