

# Low FODMAP Diet: The D.I.Y Beginner's Guide (Plus PDFs)

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*[Last updated 5th October, 2021]*

Do you often experience digestive stress after eating certain foods?

Can the discomfort be so severe that it affects your day-to-day activities?



The link between foods and digestive disorders is well recognised, and there is a good chance that FODMAPs – small carbohydrates in certain foods – are the culprit.

As a food intolerance dietitian, I've seen how remarkable a low-FODMAP diet can be for people with chronic gastrointestinal symptoms... things like [recurrent bloating](#), [gas](#), cramps, [diarrhea](#) or [constipation](#). This diet is one of the [natural ways](#) known to alleviate such chronic symptoms.

There's also many new case studies suggesting it can help with several other chronic health conditions too.

If you're keen to learn more, and maybe even try a low FODMAP diet for yourself, this 3,000 word beginner's guide is a great place to start.

particular section.

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## What Are FODMAPs?

A low FODMAP diet is also known as a FODMAP elimination diet.

This is a temporary eating pattern that has a very low amount of food compounds called FODMAPs.



The acronym stands for:

- **Fermentable** – meaning they are broken down (fermented) by bacteria in the large bowel
- **Oligosaccharides** – “oligo” means “few” and “saccharide” means sugar. These molecules are made up of individual sugars joined together in a chain



intoxication!)

As you can see, there are four main saccharide groups that make up FODMAPs – oligosaccharides, disaccharides, monosaccharides and [polyols](#).

These FODMAP groups have specific names and may also have more than one group within them, known as a FODMAP subgroup:

- Oligosaccharides have two subgroups, known as fructans and galactans (or galacto-oligosaccharides or GOS for short)
- Disaccharides are known as lactose and only contain one group
- Monosaccharides are known as fructose (or excess fructose) and also only contain one group
- Polyols have two subgroups, known as sorbitol and mannitol

Let's stick with the term FODMAPs shall we?

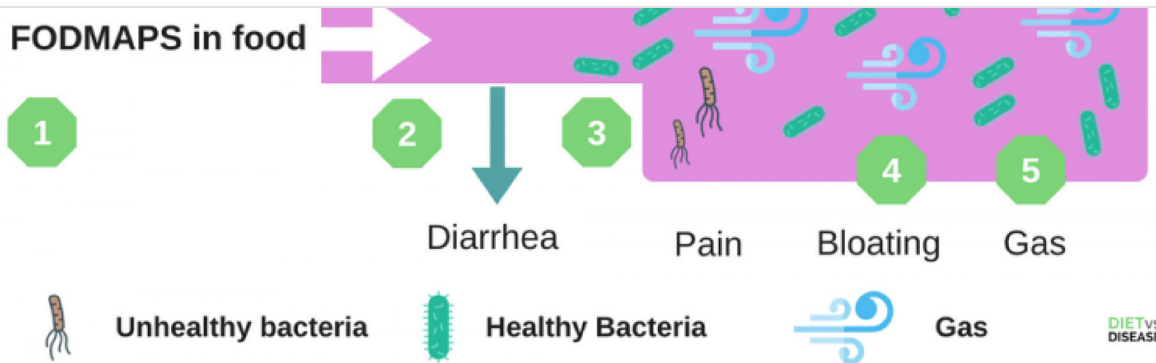
Those saccharides and polyols are short-chain carbohydrates that, if poorly digested, ferment in the lower part of your large intestine (bowel).

This fermentation process draws in water and produces carbon dioxide, hydrogen, and/or methane gas that causes the intestine to stretch and expand.

The result is strong pain, bloating, visible abdominal distension and other related symptoms ([1](#)).

# Diet v.s. disease

SCIENCE-BASED. INDEPENDENT



1. Food is eaten that contains FODMAPs.
2. Some FODMAPs may pull water into the small intestine, causing diarrhea
3. In those with IBS, FODMAPs can travel to the large intestine (gut) largely undigested.
4. When “unhealthy” bacteria interact with FODMAPs in the gut, it causes a range of symptoms such as bloating, gas and pain.
5. Different people are sensitive to different FODMAPs, so it’s important to identify which ones are the culprit.

This is a wonderful short video by Australian researchers that illustrates what FODMAPs are and how they impact our digestion:

IBS symptoms, the low FODMAP diet and the Mona...





emerging as a useful treatment tool for several other conditions too.

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It can be useful for those with:

- Irritable Bowel Syndrome ([IBS](#))- more on that below
- Other forms of Functional Gastrointestinal Disorder ([FGID](#))
- Small intestinal bacterial overgrowth ([SIBO](#))
- Certain auto-immune conditions/diseases like (potentially) [rheumatoid arthritis](#), multiple sclerosis or [eczema](#)
- [Fibromyalgia](#) or other health issues you've noticed are triggered by certain foods
- Frequent migraines that appear to be triggered after certain meals
- [Inflammatory bowel disease \(IBD\)](#) such as [Crohn's disease](#), [ulcerative](#) and [microscopic colitis](#).

The best candidates for trialling this diet also tend to answer yes to [these questions](#).

And note that it's not to be confused with a [food chemical intolerance](#) such as a [low Histamine Diet](#) or a [low Salicylate diet](#).

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**Summary:** FODMAPS are short-chain carbohydrates that, if poorly digested, ferment in the bowel to cause severe digestive stress. This diet is designed to temporarily restrict the amount of FODMAPs consumed and is useful for treating conditions like IBS.

## The “What Can I Eat on a FODMAP Diet?” food list

This is a giant list of what foods to eat, and what foods to avoid when following a low FODMAP diet.

It's based on the latest published FODMAPs data ([7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#), [11](#)).



## EAT THIS, NOT THAT FODMAPS FOOD LIST

Portion sizes are per meal/sitting. Aim to eat moderate serving sizes, even if low FODMAP (ie. not excessive amounts). For more info visit [www.DietvsDisease.org](http://www.DietvsDisease.org)

### EAT THIS (LOW FODMAP)

If no serve size given then assume moderate portion size is safe (excess quantities of low FODMAP food can create high FODMAP load)

### NOT THAT (HIGH FODMAP)

#### VEGETABLES

Alfalfa  
Arugula/Rocket  
Asian & Collard greens  
Aubergine/Eggplant  
Beans, green  
Beansprouts  
Beetroot (1/2 cup)  
Bell peppers/Capsicum  
Broccoli  
Brussels sprouts (2-4 sprouts)  
Cabbage  
Carrots  
Celery and celeriac  
Chard/Silverbeet  
Chilli, red or green  
Corn (1/2 cob max)

Courgette/Zucchini  
Cucumber  
Edamame beans  
Fennel bulb or leaves  
Ginger and Galangal  
Kale  
Lettuce and Endive- all types  
Mushrooms- tinned, shimeji, oyster  
Okra  
Olives, green or black (15 small)  
Potato- regular  
Potato- sweet potato (1/2 potato)  
Pumpkin/Squash- kent/japanese  
Pumpkin/Squash- butternut (1/2 cup)  
Radish  
Rhubarb  
Scallion/Spring onion (green tops)  
Seaweed/nori  
Snow peas/Mangout (5 pods)  
Spaghetti squash (1 cup)  
Spinach, baby and English  
Tomatoes-  
Turnip, Swede,  
Rutabagas  
Water chestnuts  
Yam

Asparagus  
Artichokes  
Cauliflower  
Garlic  
Leek (white bit)  
Onions  
Mushrooms- all other types  
Peas  
Scallions / spring onions (white bit)

#### FRUITS

Banana- firm/green (1 medium)  
Blueberries  
Cantaloupe/Rockmelon (1/2 cup)  
Coconut- desiccated (1/2 cup)

Grapes, all types  
Honeydew melon (1/2 cup)  
Kiwi fruit (2 small)  
Lemons & Limes (including juice)  
Mandarins

Oranges  
Passion fruit  
Pineapple (1 cup)  
Raspberries  
Strawberries

Apples  
Apricot  
Avocado (very small quantities may be tolerated)  
Bananas, ripe  
Blackberries  
Cherries  
Grapefruit  
Mango  
Nectarine  
Peaches  
Pears  
Plums  
Raisins and sultanas  
Watermelon

DIETvsDISEASE

Alternatively, you can download a large and printable 4-page PDF version right now here:

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Many legumes not included on this list (such as chickpeas and lentils) can be made far more digestible and low FODMAP by [pre-soaking for 7-24 hours](#).

Also note that like with anything food related, [portion size is fundamental](#). A serving of 10 almonds are considered low FODMAP, but if you eat 20 almonds then you will end up eating a high amount of FODMAPs.



**Summary:** Above is a list of high and low FODMAP foods that you can take with you when grocery shopping. Remember that many of these foods still contain trace amounts, so portion size is fundamental.

## Common FODMAPS and what to look for on the label

Common FODMAPs in your food include:

- **Fructose:** A sugar found in most fruits and vegetables.
- **Lactose:** A sugar found in dairy foods like milk.
- **Fructans:** A chain of sugars found in many vegetables and grains.
- **Galactans:** Found primarily in legumes.
- **Polyols:** Sugar alcohols like sorbitol and mannitol. You find them mainly in artificial sweeteners and chewing gum but they are also naturally occurring in various fruits and vegetables.



The Monash University low FODMAP diet phone app is a great place to start when reading food labels.

You can check the app for foods that have been tested as high FODMAP.

It's also useful to know other common high FODMAP ingredients such as inulin (chicory root), natural flavors, high fructose corn syrup, agave, honey, etc so you can avoid them also.

### Is Gluten a FODMAP?

While gluten can also [trigger food sensitivities](#) in a handful of people, it is a protein, not a carbohydrate.

Therefore gluten **cannot** be classified as a FODMAP.

This is because gluten and FODMAPs often co-exist in the same product e.g. wheat bread and pasta.

So by choosing gluten-free products means that they are also more likely to be lower in FODMAPs, and free of gluten of course.

That means gluten-free products are generally lower in FODMAPs, and free of gluten of course.

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**Summary:** FODMAPs exist mainly in dairy, legumes, and many fruits and vegetables. While gluten is not technically a FODMAP, gluten-free products are typically lower in FODMAPs anyway.

## A low FODMAP diet is very restrictive and designed to be temporary

Before we go any further, it's important to clarify that following a low FODMAP diet is *very restrictive* and cuts out numerous common foods and food groups.

That means you need to reintroduce foods at some stage, so it **cannot be a permanent solution**.



The idea is that restricting all FODMAPs at once should have a far greater and more consistent effect than simply restricting one FODMAP in isolation. By reducing all high FODMAP foods, your intake of FODMAPs will reduce to a level where you no longer get symptoms.



- Phase 1 – Elimination/Strict low FODMAP Diet: For 3-8 weeks (depends on how you respond) you strictly exclude all high FODMAP foods from your diet.
  - Phase 2 – Reintroduction/Rechallenge: You will reintroduce each FODMAP group *one at a time* to see what triggers symptoms. For example, you may first reintroduce fructose for three days. If you have no symptoms, you may then reintroduce lactose too, and so on.
  - Phase 3 – Modified/Adapted FODMAP Diet: Once the trigger FODMAPs have been identified, you will know what you can and cannot eat. You can then use this information to formulate your own personalised diet that keeps your symptoms to a minimum.
- 

**Summary:** This diet is not designed to be permanent. It is highly restrictive for several weeks, before foods are slowly reintroduced to determine what causes symptoms.

## IBS and studies that support a low FODMAP diet

Much of the research has been on patients with [Irritable Bowel Syndrome \(IBS\)](#).

IBS is a chronic gastrointestinal disorder characterised by abdominal pain and altered bowel habits, and around two thirds of IBS patients report their symptoms are related to food.



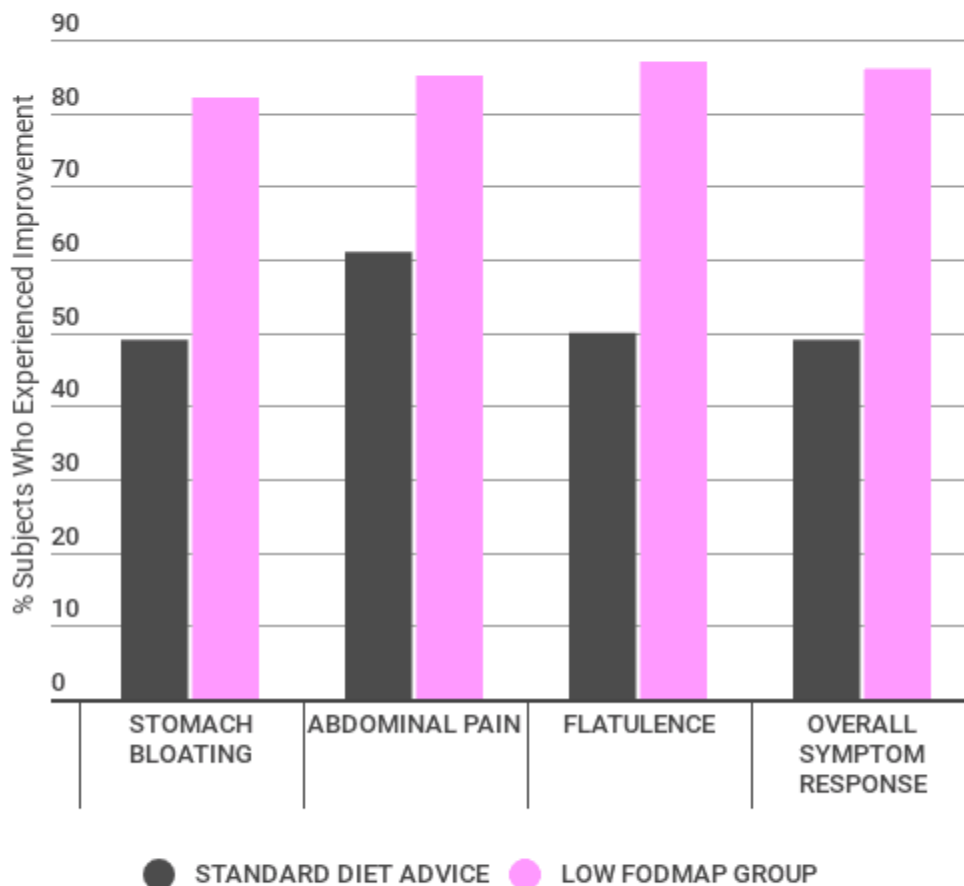
It's now estimated to affect 11% of the population globally, up to 13% in Australia and up to a whopping 20% in the US and UK ([2](#), [3](#)).



## Can you guess what diet is best for IBS?

I've illustrated some of the results here below in this chart. The black bar represents those in the standard diet advice group, the pink bars are those in the low FODMAP group.

## Low FODMAP Diet



This chart illustrates the percentage of study subjects who experienced notable improvements to their symptoms. The black bars represent those who received standard diet advice, the pink represents those who received low FODMAP diet instructions.

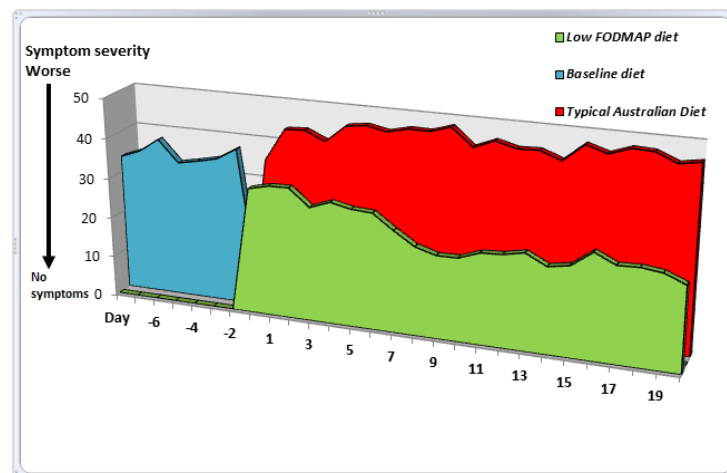
*Staudacher HM, et al., Journal of Human Nutrition & Dietetics (2011)*

Basically almost 9 out of every 10 people on the FODMAP diet had huge improvements in bloating, stomach pain, flatulence and their overall symptoms.

Another high quality study was an Australian clinical trial that compared the effects of a low FODMAP diet between 30 IBS patients and 8 similar individuals without IBS (to act as a control group for comparison) (4).

Participants were randomly assigned to receive either a diet low in FODMAPs (less than 3 grams per day) or a typical Australian diet for 21 days. This was followed by a long “washout period”, before crossing over to the alternate diet for another 21 days. Almost all food was provided to the participants, and breath hydrogen and stool samples were collected frequently.

This is what happened:



*Click to enlarge.*

IBS symptoms were reduced by 50% overall on the low FODMAP diet, with the greatest improvements observed one week after implementing the diet. More specifically, improvements were seen for bloating, [abdominal pain](#), wind and dissatisfaction with stool consistency.



Research in this area still has a way to go, but scientific consensus is that a low FODMAP diet should be the first dietary approach for treatment of recurrent gastrointestinal issues.

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**Summary:** Controlled trials continue to find that a well-designed and supervised low FODMAP diet improves symptoms by about 50% in as little as one week. The average success rate is 68-75% of patients that try it.

## Low FODMAP recipe ideas

Appropriate recipes are those low in total FODMAPs, yet still nutritious and simple to make (and delicious of course).

To save you time searching around all day, I've compiled a roundup of low FODMAP recipes for mains and snacks that are not only family-friendly, but easy to bring to work too:

- [25 Scrumptious Low FODMAP Breakfast Recipes To Start Your Day](#)
- [25 Tasty Low FODMAP Lunch Recipes For IBS](#)
- [30 Delicious Low FODMAP Dinner Recipes: Don't Get Stuck Eating The Same Thing!](#)
- [77 Easy and Tasty Low FODMAP Snacks: You Don't Have To Miss Out](#)
- [30 Delicious Low FODMAP Vegetarian And Vegan Recipes Plus Some FAQ](#)

## Probiotics may help ease symptoms

Recent data suggests there is a strong link between the balance of our gut bacteria (called the gut microbiota) and health.

An imbalance of this bacterial “community” – known medically as gut [dysbiosis](#) – can cause many problems... especially gut issues.

balance and improve health. Additional probiotics in the diet has been shown to improve a range of health aspects from gut health to [weight loss](#).

So how does this relate to FODMAPs?



Growing evidence shows that many subgroups of IBS patients have a highly irregular gut bacterial environment ([7](#)).

The question posed now is will the addition of “good” bacteria – from probiotics – help to manage FODMAP sensitivities? The research is promising, and I’ve written a [detailed review and guide here](#).

Essentially from that review it appears that the probiotic supplements VSL#3, Symprove and Align/Alflorex are the most useful. If you predominantly have [constipation](#) then look for a probiotic with a mixture of *Lactobacilli* species.

Whole food sources of probiotics include fermented foods like [quark](#), kefir yoghurt and [pickled vegetables](#) such as [sauerkraut](#). Apart from the fact that many of these probiotic containing foods are high FODMAP and so are not well tolerated by many, there are several potential problems relying on whole foods for probiotics.

For example, each batch of food will vary in their active probiotic strains and concentration. Additionally, fermented foods are rich in food chemicals like [salicylates](#) and [histamine](#), which some people may also be sensitive to ([9](#)).

This fact should be considered on an individual basis.

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**Summary:** Poorly absorbed FODMAPs are thought to directly upset the bacterial balance in our gut. In line with this theory, regular probiotic supplementation has



## A low FODMAP diet plan and dining out ideas

Diet plans are generally tailored to individual patients as we all have different eating habits and preferences.

However I have put together a sample 7-day diet plan that [you can see here](#) in more detail. Alternatively, you can download the plan and recipes immediately here:

SEND ME THE MEAL PLAN &  
SHOPPING LIST

There are also pre-packaged foods formulated to be low in FODMAPs if you prefer the convenience.

For example, [Fodmapped products](#) is the world's first dedicated FODMAP brand and is available for sale in Australia, the UK and more recently, the US.

Here is a [low FODMAP food list](#) of common products found worldwide.

### Low FODMAP dining out ideas

Set meal plans aren't particularly useful when you're eating out at a restaurant or takeaway shop. Here are some food choice tips to help you make appropriate choices:



has some lactose), smoothies made with lactose-free or almond milk and low FODMAP fruits and vegetables

- Pub food: choose plain meat, chicken and fish with low FODMAP salad or vegetables, olive oil and lemon juice as a dressing, fries with plain salt
  - Asian: choose stir fries with no onion or garlic, sushi, sashimi or rice paper rolls
  - Mexican: ask for no onion, garlic, beans and sour cream on corn nachos or tacos
  - Italian: choose gluten free pasta and ask for an accompanying sauce that does not contain onion or garlic, or ask for a salad with plain meat or chicken with olive oil and lemon juice as a dressing
  - Fast food: choose fries with plain salt
  - Cinemas: choose popcorn and water
- 

**Summary:** At the beginning of a low FODMAP diet it's much easier if you prepare your own meals at home, just to get familiar. And while it can seem overwhelming at first, trends start to emerge between what you can eat at home and dining out.

## DIY or do I need help from a Dietitian?

As you can see the low FODMAP diet is complex.

This is generalised advice and may be difficult to do yourself without professional guidance.

Group education sessions have recently been used with success, but it's traditionally done in a one-on-one setting so that any diet modifications are individualized. In fact, the diet has only ever been evaluated formally as a dietitian-delivered diet ([12](#)).

For this reason it's recommended to do this under the guidance of a dietitian where possible.





I recommend you to buy the [Monash University Low FODMAPs app](#). Monash is the world's leading source of FODMAP research and information (from Melbourne, Australia), and their app is worth every penny.

Consider probiotics as well either before you start the FODMAP diet or after you have finished. Also speak with your doctor or dietitian first just in case you require [medication](#).

Safely removing and reintroducing the appropriate foods takes a lot of learning upfront, but countless patients can tell you it's worth it.

## **What if I have already done the low FODMAP diet elimination phase?**

If you have already done the elimination phase successfully, it's time to advance to the [reintroduction/rechallenge phase](#).

Once the reintroduction phase is complete, you would move onto a [modified low FODMAP diet](#).

Also note there are [other strategies](#) to help relieve digestive issues other than than diet changes too.

## **Frequently Asked Questions About The Low FODMAP Diet**

### **What protein powders are low FODMAP?**

Whey protein isolate (WPI) is low FODMAP at 40 grams. Whey protein concentrate (WPC) may not always be low FODMAP depending of the lactose content.

Rice and pea protein are vegan protein powders that are low FODMAP at 40 grams (2 tablespoons).



For more detailed information on picking a low FODMAP protein powder see [this article](#).

## Can I still do The Low FODMAP Diet if I'm a Vegetarian or Vegan?

Yes of course, but it can be more tricky because many staple vegetarian and vegan protein options are high FODMAP.

This includes legumes, some nuts and soy products.

Low FODMAP vegetarian and vegan protein options include:

- Firm tofu (2/3 cup cubed, 160g)
- Tempeh (100g)
- Quorn mince, no onion (75g)
- Eggs (2 eggs, 117g)
- Some nuts and seeds (refer to this [low FODMAP food list](#) for specifics)
- Canned and rinsed chickpeas/garbanzo beans and butter beans (1/4 cup, 42g)
- Canned and rinsed lentils (1/2 cup, 46g)
- Quinoa (1 cup cooked, 155g)
- Soy protein milk (1 cup, 250ml)
- Lactose free cow's milk (1 cup, 250ml)
- Lactose free yogurt (1 tub, 170g)
- Greek yogurt (4/5 cup, 200g)
- Hard yellow cheese e.g. cheddar, Colby, Swiss (2 slices, 40g)
- Cottage cheese (4 tablespoons, 36g)
- Soy cheese (2 slices, 40g)

## Can I Cook With High FODMAP Foods and Then Just Remove Them?

Yes and no. **Let's start with the no.**

Unfortunately, most FODMAPs mix with water (known as water soluble). This means mixing high FODMAP foods with other ingredients when cooking could see the



It's thought that high temperature cooking can breakdown FODMAPs (potentially favorable), but to what extent is not yet known. Therefore, currently the best way to keep your meal low FODMAP is to cook with only safe ingredients.

**There is an exception, which is why I said “yes” in the beginning.**

Cooking with garlic and/or onion *in oil* is safe as long as you remove all pieces before you add any other ingredients. While FODMAPs mix with water, they do not mix with oil (much like water does not mix with oil, if you ever drop oil into water you will see).

So for example, you can cook whole garlic cloves in oil, which allows the flavor compounds to mix with the oil but not the FODMAPS. Then remove the garlic from the oil before adding any other ingredients (so keep the garlic pieces large so they are easy to remove). This leaves you with what is essentially garlic-infused oil, which is low FODMAP.

### **More on IBS, FODMAPs and related topics**

- [Best Remedies, Medicine, & Low FODMAP Products For Stomach Pain and IBS](#)
- [7-Day Low FODMAP Diet Plan For IBS](#)
- [FODMAP Reintroduction Plan and Challenge Phase: Your Guide and FAQ](#)
- [The “Eat This, Not That” FODMAP Foods List](#)
- [Best Probiotics For Irritable Bowel Syndrome \(IBS\): Explained in Plain English](#)
- [How To Stop Diarrhea: Diet Changes and Natural Remedies](#)
- [11 Warning Signs You Have A Sneaky Food Intolerance](#)



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Learn more about him on [the About page](#).

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Most of us feel overwhelmed when it comes to healthy eating, especially if we have a medical issue.

At DietvsDisease.org we provide research-backed guides and simple meal plans so that you can enjoy food without the stress, and live your healthiest, happiest life.

You can learn more [about us here](#).

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Diet vs Disease has only one agenda:

- Study the research objectively (without bias)
- Translate information into plain English
- Help you discover how to apply it to your current health condition.

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