



Which Nondairy Milk is the Best?

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This is a question I get pretty often. It's not an easy question to answer either. It depends on what your goal is. Do you want a milk that's low in calories or do you want one that's high in protein? Maybe taste is your only criteria. Luckily, if you can't or don't want to drink cow's milk there are many options in the grocery store these days.

The most common nondairy milks are soy, coconut, almond and rice. But if you peruse the aisles at stores like Whole Foods you will also find hemp milk, oat milk, flax seed milk, cashew milk, and a few others.

Most of the nondairy milks have added vitamins and minerals to mimic what would be in cow's milk. Most add calcium and vitamin D; some add other vitamins too. Let's take a closer look at the most common ones:

Soy Milk

- Mild "beany" flavor
- 80-120 calories per cup
- Typically 5-8g protein per cup
- Read [THIS](#) blog for info on the controversies of soy

Coconut Milk

- Mild coconut flavor
- 45-90 calories per cup
- No protein
- Not the same as the canned coconut milks

Almond Milk

- Typically a mild nutty flavor
- Many people prefer this nondairy milk (taste wise)
- 30-100 calories per cup
- Very little protein (most around 1 g per cup)

Rice Milk

- Mild flavor
- Some brands can be gritty
- 90-160 calories per cup
- No protein

Many of the nondairy milks have added sugar. If you are trying to reduce your sugar intake make sure to buy one that is unsweetened. Almost all of them have some kind of thickener and some have preservatives as well. Carrageenan is one thickener that is in many "natural" foods. Some studies implicate carrageenan in certain digestive diseases and inflammation, but other studies show no adverse effects.

One thing to keep in mind is that most nondairy milks are highly processed; loaded with sugars, preservatives and artificial ingredients to enhance flavor and extend shelf life; and not exactly a whole, real food. If you want to try some of these, at least shop in the refrigerated section; these milks will typically have fewer preservatives than the shelf stable options. **Pay attention to the ingredients!** If it's loaded with things you can't pronounce, then its best to just put it back on the shelf.

Comparing the Unsweetened Versions per 1 cup				
Milk	Calories	Fat	Protein	Calcium
Whole Milk	150	8	8	30%
Skim Milk	80	0	8	30%
Soy Milk- Silk, Unsweetened	80	4	7	30%
Almond Milk- Blue Diamond, Unsweetened	30	2.5	1	45%
Coconut Milk- Silk, Unsweetened	45	4.5	0	45%
Rice Milk- Rice Dream, Unsweetened	90	2.5	0	30%

Making your own nondairy milk is actually pretty easy, and I think they taste much better than the stuff on the shelves. Also, **YOU** control what goes in and what doesn't go in (sugar, thickeners, preservatives, etc.).

Almond milk is a great one to start with. You can follow this same method with most any raw nut.

What to do with the pulp? Don't toss it!!!

- Use it to make crackers like [THESE](#) or [THESE](#)
- Stir 1-2 Tablespoons into oatmeal or add to a smoothie
- Dehydrate into almond meal (and use in recipes like [THIS](#))

Check out this blog post to find recipes for Almond Milk and Lavender Infused Walnut Milk.