

## Should you switch to goats' milk? Fans claim it's less fattening, packed with vitamins and won't trigger allergies

By [Peta Bee](#)

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Many people are turning to goats' milk products as a 'healthier' alternative to dairy products — indeed the UK market is now worth £50 million a year.

At around £1.40 per litre (compared with 52p for cows' milk), goats' milk is clearly not cheap — but is it worth the outlay?

First, let's look at the nutrition.



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**Goats' milk is thought to be less fattening, packed with vitamins and less likely to spark allergies**

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'Both cows' and goats' milk contain similar levels of calcium and most other vitamins and minerals,' says Jennifer Lowe of the British Dietetic Association.

But when it comes to vitamin B12 — which is important for the formation of healthy red blood cells — cows' milk wins hands down.

'Half a tumbler of cows' milk contains nearly two thirds of the recommended daily intake — you'd have to drink nine times that amount of goats' milk to get the same levels,' says Lowe.

Some children given goats' milk have been found to have B12 deficiency (symptoms include fatigue and weakness).

However, goats' milk may boost iron absorption more effectively than cows', according to a study last

year from the University of Granada in Spain.

The study also found goats' milk contained higher levels of zinc and selenium, which help the immune system.

Furthermore, many fans of the milk claim that those with an allergy to cows' milk can happily pour goats' milk on their cereal.

But this may not be the case.

If you have an allergy to cows' milk — around five per cent of the UK population is thought to be affected — you're likely to have a similar response to goats' milk, and sheep's milk, too.

'The protein that causes an allergy is very similar in all these types of milk,' says Lowe.

People who claim to be intolerant to lactose, the natural carbohydrate in milk, often swap cows' for goats' milk.

But Lowe points out that, 'the two actually contain similar levels of lactose — 4.1 per cent in goats' compared with 4.7 per cent in cows' — so switching to goats' milk won't make any difference to your symptoms.'

Instead those people with a lactose intolerance should opt for a dairy-free alternative such as soya milk. But could goats' milk help you shed the pounds?

When it comes to calories and saturated fat, there's little difference between cows' and goats' milk.

A 100ml serving (about half a tumbler) of whole fat cows' milk provides 67 calories and 3.9 grams of fat, while goats' contains 60 calories and 3.5 grams of fat.

The semi-skimmed versions of both contain around 45 calories and 1.7 grams fat.

However, although it may not be a great help to slimmers, some claim that goats' milk helps to minimise abdominal bloating.



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**Goat's milk contains less calories than the cow variety**

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It's true that its fat globules are generally smaller than those in cows' milk so the body's digestive enzymes can break it down more rapidly — however, there's no confirmed link with reduced abdominal bloating.

Other more tried and tested methods of reducing bloating include avoiding foods such as onions and cauliflower, which are known to be a cause of the problem.

Experts also recommend trying to avoid 'gulping' too much air when drinking and eating.

They advise chewing with your mouth closed, not talking and eating at the same time, and sitting down when you eat.

Drinking lots of fluids is also important, and some experts believe that consuming foods and drinks with probiotic 'friendly' bacteria may also help.

And last year's study at the University of Granada found goats' milk contained a significant amount of oligosaccharides, compounds that reach the large intestine undigested and act like prebiotics, enhancing the growth of healthy 'probiotic' gut flora that wards off infections.

There's been a 40 per cent rise in demand for goats' milk for children in recent years, the result of an increase in the numbers said to be either allergic to dairy or unable to digest it.

But goats' milk is not for babies and young infants — the proteins are too concentrated for young children to digest and some sources of it are unpasteurised, raising the risk of bacterial infection, diarrhoea and sickness.

According to the Department of Health: 'Infant formulas and follow-on formulas based on goats' milk protein have not been approved for use in Europe'.

So when you're considering whether to switch to goat, it seems that sticking with old-fashioned cow may be better for your health — as well as your wallet.

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