

# NAVIGATING DAIRY IN LATINE DIETS

By Krista Linares, MPH, RDN, of *Nutrition con Sabor*



LOOK FOR THE SEAL.



Lactose intolerance or sensitivity are common in the Latine community. On the other hand, you may have heard that dairy foods like yogurt are gut-healthy. The truth is everyone responds differently to dairy, and may tolerate certain dairy products better than others.



Use this guide to learn more about enjoying dairy in a way that works for you.

## Digestive Health and Real California Dairy

While people with lactose sensitivity or lactose intolerance may experience gastrointestinal symptoms, **dairy is not an inflammatory food** and it can actually be **beneficial for gut health**.



### Myth-busting: Is dairy inflammatory?

- Of 19 studies that evaluated dairy products, 10 reported no effect on inflammation while eight reported a reduction in at least one biomarker of inflammation.<sup>2</sup>



### Is dairy gut-friendly?

- Fermented foods like yogurt contain live cultures that can add “beneficial bacteria” to the digestive tract and contribute to a healthier microbiota, impacting digestion and gut barrier function.<sup>3</sup>



### Why real California dairy?

- Real California dairy products are an accessible and convenient source of 13 essential nutrients. They provide a good balance of protein, carbohydrates, and fat.<sup>5</sup>



## Lactose Intolerance and Real California Dairy: Choosing What's Right for Your Body

As you can see, foods and beverages made with real California dairy have health benefits to offer, but if lactose intolerance or sensitivity are causing you discomfort, you have options.

Certain dairy products are lower in lactose and may be better tolerated. Look for **aged dairy products** or those with **live active cultures**, such as yogurt, yogurt drinks, and hard, semi-firm, or firm cheeses (like cotija).



**Lactose-free dairy products** like lactose-free milk and lactose-free yogurt have all the benefit from the nutrition and taste of real dairy, but you may have an easier time digesting them.

Lactose intolerance is not one-size-fits-all. You may be able to tolerate **small amounts of regular dairy products!** Try a small serving of milk, cheese, or yogurt and slowly increase to find out how much you tolerate.

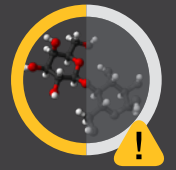


If you can tolerate a small amount of milk or cheese, **try combining this with other food options** to increase your intake of calcium, vitamin D and protein, as well as to add variety.

Some classic Latine dishes already do this, such as combining beans, corn tortillas, and cheese!  
**SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR OPTIONS!**

## LACTOSE SENSITIVITIES AND NUTRIENT CONSUMPTION AMONG LATINE CONSUMERS.

An estimated **50% of Mexican-Americans** carry a unique trait that impacts their ability to digest lactose<sup>1</sup>



Self-Reported Lactose Intolerance:

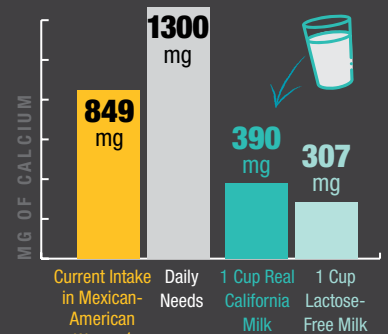
**10.05% among Hispanic-Americans<sup>1</sup>**

“I’m not lactose intolerant or anything, but I do have GI distress whenever I drink milk.”

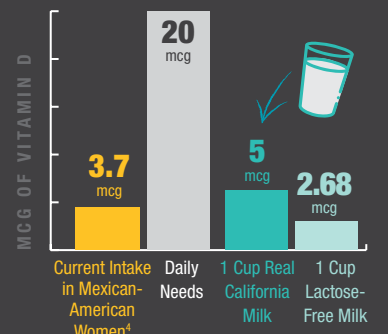
DOES THIS SOUND FAMILIAR?



### Calcium



### Vitamin D



## Comparing Calcium, Protein, and Lactose Food Sources

### Qotija Cheese

(per 1 oz, about the size of your thumb)

Protein . . . . . 6 g  
Fat . . . . . 7 g  
Carbohydrates . . . . . 0 g  
Calcium . . . . . 15% Daily Needs  
Lactose . . . . . low



### Black Beans

(per 100 g, about the size of your fist)

Protein . . . . . 9 g  
Fat . . . . . 0.5 g  
Carbohydrates . . . . . 24 g  
Calcium . . . . . 2% Daily Needs  
Lactose . . . . . none



### Corn Tortillas

(per 100 g, or 4 small tortillas)

Protein . . . . . 6 g  
Fat . . . . . 3 g  
Carbohydrates . . . . . 45 g  
Calcium . . . . . 7% Daily Needs  
Lactose . . . . . none



## LACTOSE IN COMMON DAIRY FOODS<sup>6</sup>

Food	Lactose grams (g)
Cow's Milk (1 cup)	12
Lactose-Free Milk (1 cup)	0
Cottage Cheese (1/2 cup)	3
Yogurt (3/4–1 cup)	12–16
Asadero Cheese (1 oz)	<~1
Oaxaca Cheese (1 oz)	<~1

Yogurt is unique since the live and active cultures help digest the lactose, which can make it easier to tolerate.



## CHOOSING THE BEST REAL DAIRY OPTION FOR YOU



You should choose the real California dairy option that makes the most sense for you. This includes your lifestyle, convenience, any lactose sensitivity, as well as food culture and preferences. Heritage Latine foods like corn tortillas and beans can be combined to provide important nutrients and are overall healthy choices.

Overall, real dairy provides an efficient and cost-effective source of calcium and nutrients, and have varying levels of lactose to meet different needs. If you have concerns about lactose sensitivity, just remember you have options!

## PUTTING YOUR KNOWLEDGE INTO ACTION: RECIPES FROM REAL CALIFORNIA MILK



[Bionico \(Fruit Salad\)](#)



@presleyspantry



[Cheese and Chorizo Stuffed Jalapeños](#)



@marisolcooks



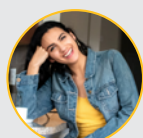
[Bean and Cheese Molletes](#)



@marisolcooks



[California Cheese Migas](#)



### About Krista Linares, MPH, RDN, of *Nutrition con Sabor*

Krista is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist and proud Latina! She holds a Master of Public Health and her experience in public health nutrition has developed her skills in communicating with and educating the public. Her goal as a dietitian is to help people stay healthy — with a special emphasis on managing food allergies and sensitivities — while celebrating their Latin culture and community.



LOOK FOR THE SEAL.

### References:

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