

THE LABEL CHEAT SHEET

Where garlic, onion and other FODMAPs hide.

READ A LABEL IN 20 SECONDS

LABEL CHEAT SHEET

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The front of a packet is marketing. The ingredients list tells you what you're eating.

- 1 Skip the front.** “Natural”, “healthy”, “high protein” and “gut friendly” tell you nothing about FODMAPs.
- 2 Go to the ingredients list.** Makers list ingredients by weight, biggest first. Garlic and onion count wherever they sit on the list, even last.
- 3 Scan for the six flags below.**
- 4 Check every flavor.** The plain and flavored versions of the same product often have different ingredients. So does the same brand in a different country.

THE SIX FLAGS

FLAG	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE ON A LABEL
1. Garlic and onion	Garlic, onion, shallot or leek in any form: powder, salt, dried, dehydrated, juice or extract
2. Hidden garlic and onion	“Natural flavors” or “flavoring” on meat, poultry, sausages, deli meat and stock. US rules let garlic and onion powder sit inside those words on meat products. On other foods they have to be named
3. Added fibers	Inulin, chicory root, FOS (fructooligosaccharides), oligofructose, GOS, “prebiotic fiber”
4. Sugar alcohols	Anything ending in “-itol”: sorbitol, mannitol, xylitol, maltitol. Also isomalt. Erythritol is the mildest of them
5. High-fructose sweeteners	Honey, agave, high-fructose corn syrup, fructose, apple or pear juice, fruit juice concentrate
6. Lactose	Milk, milk solids, milk powder or whey protein concentrate, in a product that isn't lactose-free

Wheat, rye and barley are high in FODMAPs when they are the main ingredient, as in bread, pasta and cereal. A small amount far down the list, as in soy sauce, is a different matter.

WHERE THEY HIDE

LABEL CHEAT SHEET

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IN THE STORE	THE USUAL PROBLEM	A GOOD LABEL READS
Stock, broth and bouillon	Onion and garlic in almost all of them	No onion, no garlic, no “flavor”. Or a certified low-FODMAP stock
Pasta sauce, salsa, ketchup, barbecue sauce	Onion, garlic, high-fructose corn syrup	Tomatoes, oil, herbs, salt
Marinades, stir-fry sauces, salad dressings	Garlic, onion, honey	Make your own: tamari, oil, citrus, ginger
Seasoning blends and garlic salt	Garlic and onion powder	Single spices: paprika, cumin, pepper, oregano
Sausages, deli meat, jerky, meatballs, rotisserie chicken	Garlic, onion, “natural flavors”	Plain meat you season yourself
Soups and ready meals	Onion and garlic as the base	Rare. Cook a batch and freeze it
Flavored chips, crackers, rice cakes and rice pouches	Onion and garlic powder, milk solids	The plain version: rice and salt
Protein bars, powders and shakes	Inulin or chicory root, sugar alcohols, whey concentrate	Whey protein isolate, unflavored. Very few bars pass
Flavored yogurt	Chicory root, fruit concentrates, honey, lactose	Plain: milk, lactase, cultures
Plant milks	Inulin; soy milk made from whole soybeans	Almond: water, almonds. Soy: made from soy protein
Bread	Wheat; “sourdough” made with yeast; added honey or inulin	Flour, water, salt, sourdough culture
Sugar-free gum, mints, candy and syrups	Sugar alcohols	Regular sugar in small amounts, or pure maple syrup
Canned tomatoes and tuna	“With garlic” or “with onion” versions; flavored tuna	Tomatoes. Tuna, water, salt

WORDS THAT SOUND SAFE

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ON THE PACK

WHY IT DOESN'T HELP

"Gluten-free"	Gluten is a protein. FODMAPs are carbohydrates. Gluten-free foods can still contain onion, garlic, honey, inulin or apple fiber
"Lactose-free"	Good for lactose, but check the rest. Flavored lactose-free yogurts often add chicory root or fruit concentrate
"Sugar-free", "no sugar added", "keto", "low carb"	Usually sweetened with sugar alcohols
"High fiber", "prebiotic", "gut health"	Often means added inulin or chicory root, which are FODMAPs
"Natural", "clean", "organic"	Says nothing about FODMAPs. Honey, garlic and onion are all natural
"Plant-based", "vegan"	Often built on beans, lentils, cashews, onion and garlic
"Low FODMAP" on a packet, with no logo	Not a regulated claim. Look for a certification logo

LOGOS YOU CAN TRUST

Two certification programs lab-test packaged products and put a low-FODMAP certified logo on the pack. Both test each product at the serve size on the pack. Read the label anyway, because certified doesn't always mean a short ingredient list.

SERVE SIZE STILL MATTERS

A clean label doesn't make a food unlimited. Many foods are low FODMAP only up to a certain amount. The Build Plan and The Lean Plan have those amounts worked out in every recipe.

LABELS THAT PASS

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For the few staples that come in a packet, this is what a good ingredients list looks like. Read the list, whatever the brand.

STAPLE	A GOOD LABEL READS
Lactose-free milk	Milk, lactase
Plain yogurt	Milk, lactase, cultures
Whey protein	Whey protein isolate (and lecithin), unflavored
Tamari	Soybeans, water, salt
Peanut butter	Peanuts (and salt)
Canned tomatoes	Tomatoes (and salt)
Canned tuna	Tuna, water, salt
Rice cakes	Rice (and salt)
Rice pasta	Rice, water
Corn tortillas	Corn, water, lime
Oats	Oats
Maple syrup	Pure maple syrup
Sourdough bread	Flour, water, salt, sourdough culture or starter
Microwave rice	Rice, water, oil
Garlic-infused oil	Oil and garlic flavor or extract, with no garlic pieces left in it

EASY SWAPS

LABEL CHEAT SHEET

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INSTEAD OF	USE
Garlic	Garlic-infused oil. The flavor moves into the oil and the FODMAPs don't
Onion	Scallion green tops (not the white part), or chives
Stock cube	The juices from the meat you're cooking, or a certified low-FODMAP stock
Honey	Pure maple syrup, in a small amount
Regular or Greek yogurt	Plain lactose-free yogurt
Wheat pasta	Rice pasta
Protein bar	Plain rice cakes with peanut butter
Flavored rice pouch	A plain rice pouch with a splash of tamari
Bottled dressing	Olive oil, lemon juice and mustard

THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER

- 1 Recipes change, so read the label every time you buy, even on something you've bought before.
- 2 Treat meat, sausages and stock as a maybe if the label lists "flavors" and nothing more.
- 3 This sheet helps you read labels. It is not medical advice, and it doesn't replace a doctor or a FODMAP-trained dietitian.

WANT THE MEALS WORKED OUT FOR YOU?

The Build Plan (for gaining) and The Lean Plan (for losing) each have 64 low-FODMAP recipes with the portions already measured, plus week plans at three calorie levels.