

A stir-in sauce can come to the rescue on days you don't feel like cooking. Here's how to make a healthy choice.

## your guide to Asian stir-in sauces

**W**ith a handy bottle or sachet, flavours from around the world are at our fingertips quickly and easily. Ready-made curries and Asian stir-fry sauces make it easy to create tasty dinners in a flash. But while they're high in flavour, they can also be very high in salt and saturated ('bad') fat, so you need to be careful what you choose.

### What to add

Stir-in sauces have instructions, but you don't have to be a slave to the packet directions. So, consider adapting what's written



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on the pack to make your own healthier version. For example, some instructions are heavy on oil for browning, when you could cut fat and kilojoules by lightly spraying the pan with oil to get the same golden effect. Similarly,

### What to look for

To make the healthiest choice, check the 'per serve' column on the label. It's best to look for

- **Less than 500kJ**
- **Less than 15g total fat**
- **Less than 5g saturated fat**
- **Less than 10g sugar** (or 15g if contains fruit or milk products)
- **Less than 500mg sodium**

instead of coconut cream, cut kilojoules and saturated fat by using a light coconut milk, or a coconut-flavoured evaporated skim milk.

And don't be afraid to add more vegetables than suggested, fresh or even frozen. Adding large helpings of vegies will be light on kilojoules, but high on nutrients and filling, too. Another option for cutting the kilojoules, saturated fat and salt is to use less sauce. For example, you could add half a jar instead of a whole jar, or use a two-serve sachet for a family meal.

Using extra herbs, spices, chilli or lemon will allow you to boost the flavour without adding more sauce, which is a great way to cut back on salt.

### Cut kilojoules

Whether you want to lose weight, or simply maintain your weight, we recommend using sauces with less than 500kJ per serve.

Also, be mindful of the portion of rice or pasta you serve with your meal – a cup is generally a healthy serve.

### Reduce 'bad' fat

We all need some healthy fats in our diet, but the less saturated fat the better. Choose a meal-base sauce with less than 15g total fat and less than 5g saturated fat per serve. Overall, the fat content of the meal will likely be higher than just what's in the sauce. Be mindful of trimming meat and minimising the cooking oil you add, along with any creamy toppings.

### Check for sugar

Many stir-in sauces can have large amounts of added sugar, so it's worth checking. Ideally, we recommend choosing products with less than 10g sugar per serve. Some products will have natural sugars added through fruit or milk powder (you'll find these in the ingredients list). If this is the case then it's okay to have up to 15g of sugar per serve.

### Go for less salt

Most of the salt in our diets comes from processed foods, and many of us eat far more salt than is healthy. Stir-in sauces can be particularly high in salt (listed

on the label as sodium), some with half your entire day's worth per serve. Always check and compare the sodium content of foods you buy. Ideally look for a stir-in sauce with less than 500mg sodium per serve, but the less the better, particularly if you have high blood pressure or type 2 diabetes and need to watch your salt intake. [hfg](#)



## Your best choices

We've scoured the shelves and picked out some of the healthier Asian stir-in sauces for you.



**1 Masterfoods stir fry teriyaki chicken recipe base** with 218kJ, 0.5g fat, <0.1g sat fat, 8.3g sugars and 183mg sodium per serve.



**4 Patak's madras cooking sauce** with 440kJ, 6.8g fat, 0.5g sat fat, 4.3g sugar and 341mg sodium per serve.



**2 Passage to China honey soy & garlic stir fry sauce** with 213kJ, 0.1g fat, 0.0g sat fat, 7.5g sugar and 352mg sodium per serve.



**5 Coles green Thai curry simmer sauce** with 427kJ, 3.7g fat, 1.4g sat fat, 7.0g sugar and 464mg sodium per serve.



**3 Masterfoods stir fry satay chicken recipe base** 154kJ, 0.5g fat, 0.3g sat fat, 4.0g sugar and 430mg sodium per serve.



**6 Valcom Thai red curry Authentic home-style sauce** with 208kJ, 3.2g fat, 1.6g sat fat, 3.0g sugar and 470mg sodium per serve.

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