

FOODS THAT SUSTAIN YOU DURING RAMADAN

Harness the power of nutrition science to stay full, focused, and energised while fasting

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During Ramadan, fasting from dawn to sunset can take a toll on energy levels, making it crucial to choose nutrient-dense meals to prevent sluggishness and keep you feeling full. Making strategic food choices, both before and after your fasting period, is key. According to Vibha Bajpaiee, clinical dietitian at Aster Clinic in Bur Dubai, a well-balanced diet should include complex carbohydrates, healthy fats, lean proteins, proper hydration and essential micronutrients to support steady energy levels throughout the day. “Complex carbs, especially those rich in fibre, have a low glycemic index (GI),” she explains. “Foods with a low GI trigger a more gradual release of glucose into the bloodstream, helping to maintain energy levels and prevent crashes during fasting.”



Think fibre-packed sweet potatoes, lentils, beans and brown rice. Fibre slows down digestion, releasing energy at a steady pace. The soluble fibre found in foods such as oats, chia seeds and lentils forms a gel-like substance in your gut, slowing down stomach emptying and keeping you feeling fuller for longer. Deepti Palija, a nutrition coach and founder of Heart Life Zone in

Dubai, also points out the importance of protein-rich foods in prolonging satiety and stabilising blood sugar.

Studies also highlight the role of protein-rich suhoor meals in curbing hunger and preserving lean muscle. Eggs, Greek yogurt, lean meats and legumes work wonders for hunger control by triggering the release of appetite-regulating hormones, such as peptide YY and GLP-1, which signal to your body that it is full.

As Lina Doumani, a clinical dietician at Medcare Medical Centre Jumeirah, explains, protein also increases energy expenditure through the thermic effect of food — the increase in metabolic rate after ingestion of a meal — while preserving lean muscle mass, which enhances metabolic efficiency.

Together, these powerhouse nutrients — fibre and protein — stabilise blood sugar, curb hunger and provide a steady flow of energy.

The right food combinations matter. According to Bajpaiee, the trick is balancing your macronutrients — complex carbs, lean protein and healthy fats — plus the all-important hydration.

Complex carbs like oats, quinoa and chickpeas are slow burners. Pair these with lean proteins, which keep you feeling fuller for longer; add in almonds, walnuts and chia seeds to slow digestion.

Don't forget fresh fruits and vegetables. They're packed with fibre and micronutrients that keep you going and nourish you. With these combinations, you'll stay fuelled and focused from suhoor to iftar.

“Avoid refined sugars and white bread, which cause rapid blood sugar spikes and crashes, and limit caffeine at suhoor to prevent dehydration,” says Doumani.

After fasting for hours, the body is significantly dehydrated, which can affect energy levels, focus and even mood.

As Bajpaiee explains, “A person should consume at least 2-2.5 litres of water between iftar and suhoor to prevent dehydration”. Food is also a significant source of hydration, Paliya explains. “Watermelon, cucumbers and oranges, which are over 85 per cent water, help maintain fluid and electrolyte balance.

Dairy options such as yogurt, which contains around 85 per cent water, not only provide hydration but also support gut health.” Don't forget other liquid options such as coconut water, a natural electrolyte source, and light vegetable or chicken broths.