

Each month, our panel of experts will analyse a group of closely related food products to help you place the best choice in your shopping trolley, saving you time and helping you and your family to eat more healthily.

Along the way, we hope you'll learn a lot about the importance of knowing exactly what's in your food. Reading the label on the back of packets can seem time consuming, but it's worth it when you consider the health gains on offer.

PRODUCT	NUTRITIONAL DETAILS (per 100g)	COMMENT
Mediterranean Chunky Dip Sundried Tomato with Cashews & Parmesan  135g, \$4.85	Energy: 2360kJ. Protein: 9.2g. Fat total: 50.0g (saturated fat: 5.3g). Carbohydrate total: 19.0g (sugars: 8.8g). Sodium: 730mg.	"With canola oil as the first ingredient it's not surprising that this product is 50 per cent fat. It also has the highest energy, sodium and protein levels. I would only use this product very sparingly!" Angela
The Good Taste Co Pumpkin and Kumara Hummus  200g, \$4.30	Energy: 790kJ. Protein: 4.3g. Fat total: 11.0 (saturated fat: 0.8g). Carbohydrate total: 15.6g (sugars: 6.9g). Sodium: 630mg.	"While this product is higher in total fat (>10) than I'd like to see in a dip, nearly all of this is from 'good fats' and it contains the lowest level of saturated fats. Unfortunately this product has the second-highest level of sodium." Angela
Tararua Creamy Dips Sour Cream and Chives  250g, \$3.70	Energy: 700kJ. Protein: 5.3g. Fat total: 13.1g (saturated fat: 8.3g). Carbohydrate total: 7.5g (sugars: 5.8g). Sodium: 340mg.	"This contains MSG (listed in the ingredients as 'flavour enhancer 621') which would automatically put me off buying it." Renée
Mammoth Supply Co Kiwi Onion Dip  350g, \$4.49	Energy: 631kJ. Protein: 3.9g. Fat total: 9.1g (saturated fat: 6.3g). Carbohydrate total: 13.3g (sugars: 10.2g). Sodium: 530mg.	"This is a high-fat dip that has added colours and flavours – all of which don't add any nutritional value." Renée
Lisa's Original Hummus with Garlic and Lemon  200g, \$4.70	Energy: 953kJ. Protein: 9.1g. Fat total: 9.5g (saturated fat: 1.1g). Carbohydrate total: 27.6g (sugars: 5.4g). Sodium: 575mg.	"At 9.5 per cent fat, be very careful with portion control. [It would be] great to use as a healthier spread than butter, but as a dip half a pot has the [same amount of] calories as a meal!" Ginny
WINNER Turkish Kitchen The Authentic Greek Yoghurt and Cucumber (Jadjik) Dip,  200g, \$4.60	Energy: 458kJ. Protein: 5.7g. Fat total: 4.7g (saturated fat: 3.4g). Carbohydrate total: 8.2g (sugars: 4.6g). Sodium: 210mg.	"My smart choice would be Turkish Kitchen Greek yoghurt – it's a natural product with good, protein, calcium levels and the lowest fat levels. A great dip for veggie sticks and can be used as a dressing." Ginny



THE PANEL:



GINNY McARTHUR

A personal trainer and nutritionist specialising in weight loss, fitness and wellness plans. www.outlookforlife.co.nz



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WHEN BUYING DIPS REMEMBER...

- * "I recommend my clients choose dips with less than 10 per cent fat. With dips it's also important to watch your serve sizes; it can be easy to go overboard. Try to only use a little for taste rather than loading up." Angela
- * "Be mindful of the number of additives by way of flavour enhancers, preservatives and artificial colours." Renée
- * "When buying dips always look at the fat per 100g, not per serve." Ginny

What to add to dips to increase its nutritional value:

- * "Rather than accompanying your dips with chips or crackers, try raw vegetables such as carrots, snow peas, broccoli, celery or cauliflower." Angela
- * "I always dilute dips with low-fat yoghurt to increase the nutritional value and dilute the calories, for instance 1 teaspoon of pesto dip with 200ml yoghurt added." Ginny