

Food Safety for small caged rodents

Legend:

+ Good choice **-** feed in moderation **X** toxic to this species **+C** High in Vitamin C

Blank spaces in the table indicate foods which have either not been tested for that species, or their toxicity has not been recorded, or else the food is not particularly palatable or beneficial to the animal and therefore are best to avoid foods marked with any of the following should also be fed in moderation:

++ Gas Causing Food

+Ca High in Calcium- can lead to bladder or kidney stones

+F High in Fat

+A Acidic foods can cause mouth sores in some animals

+O High in Oxalic Acid which will bind to nutrients and make them indigestible

P:Ca High P:Ca ratio- higher phosphorous to calcium can contribute to bladder stones

+S High Sugar Content can pose a risk of diabetes in some animals and can cause obesity in all species

+P Contains natural pesticides which can be carcinogenic to rodents when fed in large quantities

+W Highly water-soluble fiber can trigger diarrhea if fed too freely or often

| | Gerbils | Guinea Pigs | Hamster | Rabbits | Rats & Mice | NOTES |
|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------|---|
| Alfalfa | | | + | - | | +Ca |
| Almond | X | X | - | X | - | +O +F (shelled) Sweet almonds only. Some almonds contain cyanide. |
| Anise | - | - | | | | +P |
| Apple | - | - | - | - | - | Avoid Seeds and Stems. +A +P +S |
| Apricot | - | + | | | + | +P +S |
| Arugula | | + | | | | |
| Artichoke | | - | | - | X | Inhibits Protein Digestion |
| Asparagus | | - | + | + | + | P:Ca |
| Avocado | | | - | X | - | Pit, rind, skin, and leaves are toxic +F. |
| Banana | - | - | - | - | - | Skin also edible Avoid green bananas +C +P +S P:Ca |
| Basil | | + | + | + | | +P |
| Beet Greens | + | + | | + | | +C +P +O P:Ca |
| Bell/Sweet Peppers | | + | | + | + | Avoid seeds. +C +O P:Ca (Green, Red, Yellow) |
| Blackberries | | + | + | X | + | Fruit and leaves are edible +S +O |
| Blueberries | | + | + | | + | +S +O |
| Bok Choy | + | - | - | - | - | ++ |

| | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|-----|----|---|---|---|
| Broccoli | + | - | - | - | + | ++ +P P:Ca |
| Brussels Sprouts | | - | - | - | X | ++ +P |
| Cabbage | - | - | - | - | X | ++ +C +W +P +O (Red, Purple or Chinese) |
| Carrots | - | - | - | - | - | Tops also edible +Ca +C +P |
| Cantaloupe | - | + | - | - | + | +C +W +P |
| Cauliflower | - | - | - | - | + | Leaves, stalks also edible ++ +P |
| Celery | - | - | - | - | - | Leaves also edible Cut into small pieces to avoid problems with strings +C +W +P |
| Chamomile | | + | | | | |
| Cherries | | + | - | | - | Remove pits +S |
| Chickweed | | + | | | | |
| Chicory | | + | + | | | |
| Cilantro | + | + | | + | + | |
| Clover | + | + | + | + | + | Beware of Pesticides |
| Collard Greens | - | + | - | + | + | +C +P |
| Corn on the Cob | - | - | - | - | - | Leaves, silks, and stalks also edible +S +P Fresh corn only. Dried corn molds easily. |
| Coriander | | + | + | | + | +C +P |
| Cranberries | | - | - | | | +S |
| Cucumber | - | - | - | - | - | +C +W |
| Currants | | + | | | | Fruits and leaves edible +C +P |
| Dates | + | | - | | | +S |
| Dandelion | | +** | +* | | | *Leaves and flower only **Leaves, flower, root, and stem +C +Ca |
| Dill | - | | | + | + | +P |
| Endive | - | + | + | + | + | +P |
| Escarole | | + | | + | + | |
| Fennel | - | | | + | + | +P |
| Figs | - | + | - | | | +S |
| Garlic | X | X | X | X | X | +P |
| Gooseberries | | + | | | | +C +S +O |
| Grapefruit | | + | X | | | +A +C +S +P |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| Grapes | - | + | - | - | - | Seedless +S +W +P |
| Grass | + | + | + | + | + | Avoid ornamental grasses. Young grass is best +C |
| Green Beans | - | - | - | - | - | +O |
| Guava | | + | - | | | +C +S +P |
| Honeydew Melon | - | + | - | - | + | +W +C +S +O +P |
| Kale | | + | - | + | + | +C +P |
| Kidney Beans | - | | - | | - | Must be soaked and cooked well |
| Kiwi | - | + | + | - | + | Skin also edible +C +S |
| Kumquat | | | + | | | |
| Lemon | | - | X | | | +A +C +P |
| Lettuce | - | + | - | + | + | Romaine, red, green. No iceberg +W +P |
| Lime | | - | X | | | +A +C +P |
| Mango | - | + | + | | - | +W +C +S +O +P |
| Mint | + | + | + | + | + | +P |
| Mustard Greens | - | - | - | - | - | +C +Ca +P |
| Nectarine | - | - | - | | - | P:Ca |
| Oats | - | + | - | | - | +O |
| Okra | | + | + | | - | |
| Onion | x | x | x | x | x | +P |
| Orange | | - | X | | X | +A +C +S +P |
| Papaya | - | + | + | + | - | Avoid seeds +S |
| Parsley | + | - | + | + | - | +C +Ca +O +P |
| Parsnip | | - | | - | | P:Ca +O +P |
| Passion Fruit | | + | | | + | +S |
| Peach | - | - | + | + | + | Remove pit P:Ca +P +S |
| Pear | - | + | + | + | + | Avoid seeds +C +P +S |
| Peas | | + | + | | + | Pods and shoots also edible +P +S |
| Persimmon | | - | | | | +C P:Ca +S |
| Pineapple | X | - | X | + | + | +A +P +S |
| Plum | - | - | + | | + | Remove pits P:Ca +P +S |
| Potato | | | + | | + | Cooked only +P No leaves No fries or chips- commercial oils can contain carcinogens |
| Pumpkin | | - | | | | P:Ca +O |

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Raspberries | - | + | + | + | - | Leaves also edible +C +P +S +O |
| Radish tops | - | + | | + | + | |
| Rhubarb | | | X | | X | Cooked only. No leaves +O +P |
| Rutabaga | | + | | | | +P |
| Sage | + | + | + | + | + | +P |
| Sorrel | | | + | | | +O |
| Spinach | + | - | - | + | - | +C +Ca ++ +O |
| Sprouts | + | + | + | - | + | Bean, Soybean |
| Squash | | - | + | | - | +O |
| Star Fruit | | | + | | | +S +P |
| Strawberries | - | + | + | + | + | Leaves also edible +C +A +S +O |
| Sweet potato | | - | + | | + | P:Ca +S +O |
| Swiss Chard | - | + | | | | +C +O |
| Tangerine | | + | | + | - | +C +A +S |
| Thistle | | + | | | | |
| Thyme | | + | | | | +P |
| Tomatoes | | - | X | + | | Leaves and stalk poisonous +C P:Ca +A +P |
| Turnips | | + | | | | |
| Turnip Greens | - | - | - | | - | ++ +O +P |
| Water Cress | - | + | | + | - | +C +W +P |
| Watermelon | | + | + | + | + | +W +S |
| Yams | | + | + | | | +S +O |
| Zucchini | | + | | + | + | |

Other foods to avoid:

Chocolate
Soda
Excess Salt
Excess Sugar
Candies
Blue Cheese
Peanut Butter

Other yummy snacks for gerbils, hamsters, rats, and mice:

Nuts (see below)
Cheeses
Yogurt
Scrambled or Boiled egg
Unseasoned meat: Chicken, Turkey, Beef, Fish
Crickets
Mealworms
Unsalted crackers or pretzels
Hard breads
Dog Biscuits

Nuts:

Nuts are generally not given to rabbits or guinea pigs who tend to take bigger bites. They can get stuck on their teeth or they can present a choking hazard. Nuts are good occasional treats for rats, hamsters, mice, or gerbils who are expert at nibbling on harder foods. Remember that nuts are high in fat, so always feed in moderation.

Acorns, Pecans- *beware of pesticides*

Almonds- *should always be given shelled*

Brazil Nuts, Cashews, Hazel Nuts, Pistachios- *no salt!*

Peanuts- *never raw- roasted and unsalted*

Walnuts- *a cracked walnut is great workout for teeth!*

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