Healthy Eating in Delhi

Complete Nutrition Guide 2026

by Nubo — Fresh Made Simple

A science-backed guide to balanced nutrition, healthy dining out, and practical meal planning for Delhi residents.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to Balanced Nutrition

Balanced nutrition is the foundation of good health. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), a healthy diet helps protect against malnutrition in all its forms, as well as non-communicable diseases including diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and cancer [1]. In India, where dietary patterns are rapidly shifting toward processed foods, understanding the basics of balanced nutrition has never been more critical.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) released updated Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs) in 2024, emphasising the importance of dietary diversity, adequate protein intake, and reduced consumption of ultra-processed foods [2]. These guidelines form the scientific backbone of this guide.

What Does 'Balanced' Mean?

A balanced diet provides the body with essential nutrients in the right proportions. The ICMR recommends that a healthy adult's daily caloric intake should comprise approximately:

Nutrient	% of Calories	Key Sources
Carbohydrates	50–60%	Whole grains, fruits, vegetables
Protein	15–20%	Legumes, dairy, lean meats, eggs
Fat	20–30%	Nuts, seeds, olive oil, avocado
Fibre	25–30 g/day	Vegetables, whole grains, legumes

Source: ICMR-NIN Dietary Guidelines for Indians, 2024 [2]

The Delhi Context

Delhi's food landscape presents unique challenges. A 2023 survey by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) found that 68% of meals consumed outside the home in Delhi exceeded recommended sodium levels, and 42% contained more than 800 calories per serving [3]. Air pollution further increases the body's need for antioxidant-rich foods, making nutrient-dense dining options essential for Delhi residents [4].

This guide will equip you with the knowledge to make informed dietary choices — whether you're cooking at home, ordering delivery, or dining out at restaurants across the city.

Chapter 2

Understanding Macronutrients

Macronutrients — carbohydrates, proteins, and fats — are the three primary categories of nutrients that provide energy (calories) to the body. Each plays a distinct role in maintaining health, and understanding their functions helps you build meals that sustain energy, support muscle recovery, and promote overall wellbeing [5].

Carbohydrates: Your Primary Energy Source

Carbohydrates are the body's preferred fuel source. The USDA recommends that 45–65% of total daily calories come from carbohydrates, with an emphasis on complex carbs — whole grains, vegetables, and legumes — rather than refined sugars [6]. Complex carbohydrates provide sustained energy release and are rich in fibre, which supports digestive health and helps regulate blood sugar levels.

Protein: Building & Repair

Protein is essential for muscle repair, immune function, and enzyme production. The ICMR recommends 0.8–1 g of protein per kg of body weight daily for sedentary adults, and 1.2–1.6 g for active individuals [2]. Plant-based protein sources (lentils, chickpeas, paneer, tofu) are particularly relevant in the Indian dietary context, where a significant portion of the population follows vegetarian diets.

Food Source	Protein (per 100g)	Quality Score
Chicken breast	31 g	High (complete amino acids)
Paneer	18 g	High (complete amino acids)
Chickpeas (cooked)	9 g	Medium (combine with grains)
Tofu	8 g	High (complete amino acids)
Quinoa	4.4 g	High (complete amino acids)
Brown rice	2.6 g	Low (combine with legumes)

Source: USDA FoodData Central [7]; NIN Food Composition Tables [8]

Fats: Essential, Not Evil

Dietary fat is critical for hormone production, nutrient absorption (vitamins A, D, E, K), and brain health. The key is choosing unsaturated fats (olive oil, nuts, avocado, fatty fish) over saturated and trans fats. The WHO recommends limiting saturated fat intake to less than 10% of total energy intake and trans fat to less than 1% [1]. In practice, this means avoiding deep-fried snacks, hydrogenated vegetable oils, and commercially baked goods.

Chapter 3

Micronutrients & Their Role

While macronutrients provide energy, micronutrients — vitamins and minerals — regulate thousands of metabolic processes. Deficiencies in key micronutrients are widespread in India: the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) reported that 57% of women and 25% of men in India are anaemic, largely due to iron and vitamin B12 deficiency [9].

Micronutrient	Daily Need	Best Sources	Deficiency Risk
Iron	17 mg (women) 11 mg (men)	Spinach, lentils, red meat	Anaemia, fatigue
Vitamin D	600 IU	Sunlight, fortified foods, eggs	Bone weakness, immunity
Vitamin B12	2.4 mcg	Dairy, eggs, fortified cereals	Nerve damage, fatigue
Calcium	1000 mg	Dairy, sesame, leafy greens	Osteoporosis
Zinc	12 mg (men) 10 mg (women)	Nuts, seeds, legumes	Impaired immunity
Omega-3	250–500 mg	Flaxseed, walnuts, fish	Inflammation, brain fog

Source: ICMR-NIN RDA 2024 [2]; NFHS-5 [9]

Antioxidants & Delhi's Air Quality

Delhi's air quality index regularly exceeds 300 (hazardous) during winter months. Research published in the Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health found that diets rich in antioxidants — particularly vitamins C and E, beta-carotene, and polyphenols — can mitigate some of the oxidative stress caused by air pollution exposure [4]. Foods like berries, citrus fruits, turmeric, green leafy vegetables, and green tea are particularly beneficial.

At Nubo, we incorporate antioxidant-rich ingredients like spinach, kale, beetroot, berries, and turmeric across our menu specifically to address this Delhi-specific health concern.

Chapter 4

Healthy Dining Out in Delhi

Eating out doesn't have to mean compromising on nutrition. However, navigating Delhi's restaurant scene requires awareness. A 2024 analysis by FSSAI found that restaurant meals in India contain, on average, 40% more calories and 60% more sodium than home-cooked equivalents [10].

What to Look For

- **Calorie transparency:** Choose restaurants that display nutritional information. FSSAI's Eat Right India initiative encourages this practice [10].
- **Whole ingredients:** Prioritise dishes made with identifiable, whole-food ingredients rather than pre-processed components.
- **Cooking methods:** Grilled, steamed, and baked preparations are generally healthier than deep-fried alternatives.
- **Portion awareness:** Restaurant portions in Delhi have increased 30% over the past decade [3]. Consider sharing or taking leftovers home.
- **Hidden sugars:** Sauces, dressings, and beverages often contain significant added sugar. Request them on the side.

Metric	Nubo Bowl	Typical Fast Food	Fine Dining
Calories	400–600	800–1200	600–900
Protein	20–35 g	12–18 g	15–25 g
Sodium	300–500 mg	900–1500 mg	700–1100 mg
Fibre	8–14 g	2–5 g	3–7 g
Added Sugar	0–5 g	15–30 g	10–20 g
Preservatives	None	5–12 additives	1–5 additives

Source: Nubo internal data; CSE Delhi Food Survey 2023 [3]; FSSAI Eat Right India [10]

Delhi's Best Healthy Dining Neighbourhoods

Several Delhi neighbourhoods have emerged as hubs for health-conscious dining:

- **Hauz Khas:** Home to Nubo and several organic cafes, offering diverse healthy options from bowls to smoothies.
- **Khan Market:** Multiple restaurants now offer calorie-counted menus and plant-based options.

- **Connaught Place:** A growing number of health-focused eateries alongside traditional restaurants.
- **Shahpur Jat:** An emerging destination for artisanal, whole-food dining experiences.

Chapter 5

Nutritional Benefits of Organic Foods

The organic food market in India is projected to reach USD 2.5 billion by 2027, growing at 20% CAGR [11]. But are organic foods actually more nutritious? The evidence is nuanced.

What the Science Says

A landmark meta-analysis published in the British Journal of Nutrition, covering 343 peer-reviewed studies, found that organic crops had significantly higher concentrations of antioxidants (18–69% more) and lower concentrations of cadmium (a toxic heavy metal) and pesticide residues compared to conventional crops [12].

However, the USDA notes that the term 'organic' primarily refers to farming practices — avoiding synthetic pesticides, GMOs, and artificial fertilisers — rather than guaranteeing superior nutritional content [13]. The health benefits of organic food may be more about what's absent (pesticide residues, antibiotics) than what's added.

Organic Farming in Delhi NCR

Delhi NCR has seen a surge in organic farming initiatives. Key developments include:

- **15+ organic farms** within 200 km of Delhi supply restaurants and retail outlets.
- **FSSAI's Jaivik Bharat** certification programme has certified over 1,200 products nationally [10].
- **Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)** models are gaining traction, connecting Delhi consumers directly with organic farmers.
- **Nubo sources 80%+** of ingredients from verified organic and sustainable farms in Delhi NCR.

Pesticide Residues: A Real Concern

FSSAI's 2023 annual monitoring report found that 4.7% of food samples tested in Delhi contained pesticide residues above maximum residue limits (MRLs) [14]. While this represents improvement from previous years, it underscores the importance of sourcing from trusted suppliers who can demonstrate compliance with food safety standards.

Chapter 6

7-Day Sample Meal Plan

This meal plan is designed for a moderately active adult (1800–2200 calories/day) and incorporates a mix of home-cooked meals and healthy dining-out options. It follows ICMR guidelines for macronutrient distribution and micronutrient adequacy [2].

Monday

Meal	What to Eat	Nutrition
Breakfast	Overnight oats with chia seeds, almonds, banana	380 cal, 14g protein
Lunch	Nubo Falafel Power Bowl (quinoa base)	520 cal, 22g protein
Snack	Greek yogurt with mixed berries	150 cal, 12g protein
Dinner	Grilled paneer with stir-fried vegetables, brown rice	480 cal, 24g protein

Tuesday

Meal	What to Eat	Nutrition
Breakfast	Moong dal chilla with mint chutney	320 cal, 16g protein
Lunch	Nubo Mediterranean Wrap	480 cal, 20g protein
Snack	Apple with almond butter	180 cal, 5g protein
Dinner	Lentil soup with whole wheat roti, cucumber raita	450 cal, 18g protein

Wednesday

Meal	What to Eat	Nutrition
Breakfast	Smoothie bowl (banana, spinach, protein powder, granola)	400 cal, 22g protein
Lunch	Nubo Asian Sesame Bowl	510 cal, 28g protein
Snack	Trail mix (30g)	160 cal, 5g protein
Dinner	Tofu tikka with mixed salad, millet	440 cal, 20g protein

Thursday

Meal	What to Eat	Nutrition
Breakfast	Whole wheat toast with avocado, poached egg	360 cal, 15g protein
Lunch	Rajma chawal with vegetable raita	520 cal, 18g protein
Snack	Roasted chickpeas (50g)	170 cal, 8g protein
Dinner	Nubo Protein Power Bowl	550 cal, 35g protein

Friday

Meal	What to Eat	Nutrition
Breakfast	Idli with sambar and coconut chutney	340 cal, 10g protein
Lunch	Nubo BBQ Bowl with brown rice	530 cal, 26g protein
Snack	Banana with peanut butter	200 cal, 6g protein
Dinner	Fish curry with steamed rice, salad	480 cal, 30g protein

Saturday

Meal	What to Eat	Nutrition
Breakfast	Poha with peanuts, lime, vegetables	350 cal, 9g protein
Lunch	Nubo Green Goddess Bowl	470 cal, 20g protein
Snack	Fruit chaat with chaat masala	120 cal, 2g protein
Dinner	Palak paneer, quinoa, mixed salad	510 cal, 25g protein

Sunday

Meal	What to Eat	Nutrition
Breakfast	Masala dosa with sambar (half portion)	380 cal, 8g protein
Lunch	Nubo Build Your Own Bowl	500 cal, 24g protein
Snack	Makhana (fox nuts, roasted)	110 cal, 4g protein
Dinner	Grilled chicken/paneer salad with olive oil dressing	420 cal, 32g protein

Chapter 7

Nubo's Approach to Nutrition

At Nubo, we believe healthy eating should be simple, delicious, and accessible. Our menu is built on four pillars that reflect the latest nutritional science and the specific needs of Delhi's health-conscious community.

- **Calorie Transparency:** Every menu item displays exact calorie and macronutrient counts. We believe informed choices lead to better outcomes. Our digital menu and in-store displays make nutritional data immediately accessible.
- **High-Protein Design:** Our bowls average 25g of protein per serving; wraps average 22g. We use a combination of plant-based and lean animal proteins to ensure complete amino acid profiles.
- **Local & Organic Sourcing:** 80%+ of our ingredients come from verified organic farms within 200 km of Delhi. This reduces transportation-related nutrient loss and supports the local agricultural economy.
- **Zero Compromise:** No artificial preservatives, colours, refined sugar, or hydrogenated oils in any dish. Our sauces and dressings are made in-house with whole-food ingredients.

Nubo Nutritional Standards

Standard	Nubo Commitment	Industry Average
Calories per bowl	400–600	700–1000
Protein per serving	20–35g	10–18g
Sodium per serving	300–500 mg	800–1500 mg
Fresh vegetables	150–200 g	30–60 g
Artificial additives	0	5–12
Sugar per serving	0–5 g (natural)	15–30 g

Visit us at Hauz Khas, New Delhi or explore our full menu at **eatnubo.com/menu**

Chapter 8

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