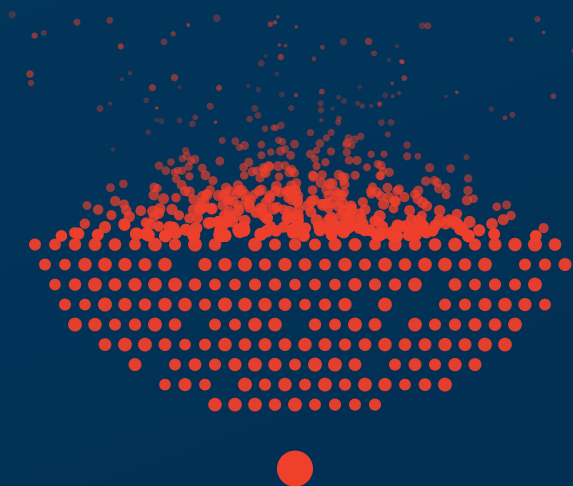


— A GUIDE TO FOOD LABELS —

WORTHY NUMBERS

The numbers about your food,
and which ones help you decide.



MILAN STANCEVIC

Product and recipe builder, and the maker of Chef Mealan

SIX NUMBERS ABOUT YOUR FOOD

What they tell you, and how to use them at your next meal.

Numbers about your food	what it says	page
The label	100 g	3
Nutri-Score	A to E	4
High protein	20%	5
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GI and GL	0 to 100, per portion	7
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THE LABEL

The label counts per 100 g, not per bowl.

Almost every pack in the EU lists the same values per 100 g or 100 ml: energy in kJ and kcal, fat and saturates, carbohydrate and sugars, protein and salt. A value per portion is optional, and the portion is the maker’s guess.

Use per 100 g to compare two packs on the shelf. Your bowl is a different number: what you pour, plus what you pour over it.

Granola	Per 100 g	Your 60 g
Energy	450 kcal	270 kcal
Fat	18 g	10.8 g
of which saturates	3 g	1.8 g
Carbohydrate	60 g	36 g
of which sugars	20 g	12 g
Protein	9 g	5.4 g
Salt	0.3 g	0.2 g

Typical values for a granola. Check your own pack.

USE IT

Compare packs per 100 g. For your bowl, multiply by your grams and divide by 100: $450 \text{ kcal} \times 60 \div 100 = 270 \text{ kcal}$.

The letter grades the product, not your meal.

Nutri-Score gives a product one letter from A to E, calculated per 100 g or 100 ml. France started it in 2017. Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland back it too. It is voluntary, so many packs carry no letter. An updated formula has applied since 2024 in most of these countries.

The letter sums up one product. Energy, sugars, saturates and salt add points. Protein, fibre, and fruit, vegetables and legumes take points off. The total becomes the letter. It leaves out how much you eat, what you eat it with and what your day needs.



IT HELPS

Two mueslis on one shelf:
pick the better letter.

IT CAN'T

tell you whether your lunch
fits your day.

USE IT

Use the letter to pick between two products of the same kind.
Then judge the meal by your portion and the rest of
your plate.

“High protein” is a share of the energy, not an amount.

In the EU, a pack may say Source of protein when at least 12% of its energy comes from protein, and High protein when at least 20% does.

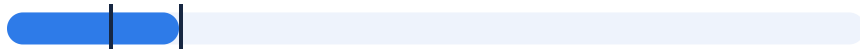
A share says nothing about how many grams of protein your portion gives you. The PD formula gives this share as one number for your whole meal. You find it on page 8.

Share of energy from protein

lines at 12% and 20%

Protein bar, 60 g

250 kcal



20%: High protein

about 13 g protein

Skyl, 200 g

about 125 kcal



About 70%: High protein

about 22 g protein

Typical values. Check your own packs.

USE IT

Read the claim as a first filter. Then count the grams of protein in your portion.

20 g of protein is not always the same 20 g.

Protein consists of amino acids, and some of them only food can give you. A quality score checks two things: whether the protein brings enough of each, and how much of it your body takes up.

PDCAAS is the older score. It caps every protein at 1.0, so the best ones look the same. DIAAS, which the FAO recommended in 2013, measures each amino acid at the end of the small intestine, where your body takes it up. It has no cap.



USE IT

You won't find these scores on a pack. Animal proteins and soy score high on their own. Mix plant proteins: beans with rice, bread with hummus.

GL is GI with your portion in it.

GI ranks carbohydrate foods from 0 to 100 by how much they raise blood glucose over two hours, against pure glucose at 100. Labs test it on a fixed amount of carbohydrate, not on your portion.

GL brings your portion in. A GL of 10 or less counts as low, 11 to 19 as medium, and 20 or more as high. Packs rarely print GI: look it up in the University of Sydney GI database at glycemicindex.com.

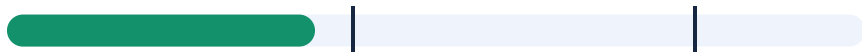
$$\text{GL} = \text{GI} \times \text{grams of carbohydrate} \div 100$$

One food, GI 60, two portions

10 low · 20 high

15 g carbohydrate

GL 9 · low



30 g carbohydrate

GL 18 · medium



USE IT

Use GI to compare two carbohydrate foods. Decide the meal with GL and the rest of your plate: protein, fat and fibre slow the rise too.

PD: one number for protein against energy.

PD is grams of protein per 100 kcal. No pack prints it. You calculate it from two lines of the label: $\text{protein} \div \text{kcal} \times 100$. Granola: $9 \text{ g} \div 450 \text{ kcal} \times 100 = \text{PD } 2$.

PD is the protein claim from page 5 in another unit. Protein gives 4 kcal per gram, so Source of protein (12%) is PD 3, and High protein (20%) is PD 5. Those lines are the same for everyone.

Your own target comes from your goal, your body and your training. Two examples: a man of 80 kg who trains twice a week and wants to keep his weight needs about 2,350 kcal and 150 g of protein. A woman of 66 kg who trains three times a week and wants to build muscle needs about 1,950 kcal and 125 g. Different bodies, goals and amounts, and both land on PD 6.4. Chef Mealan calculates your own target with you and shows every step of the sum.

Grams of protein per 100 kcal, from 0 to 20 · chicken and rice weighed cooked



USE IT

When you calculate a plate and it comes in under your target, add or swap one food with higher PD and calculate the plate's PD again.

One bowl, every number.

60 g of granola with 200 ml of milk 1.5%. Then the same granola with 170 g of skyr instead of the milk. The grams you pour and the PD tell you most about this bowl. For a plate's PD, add up its protein and its kcal first, then divide.

AS POURED

PD 3.4

364 kcal · 12.2 g protein

WITH 170 g OF SKYR

PD 6.4

377 kcal · 24.1 g protein

The label	60 g of granola gives 5.4 g of protein, from 9 g per 100 g
Nutri-Score	Grades the granola pack, often a C, not the bowl
Claim	13% of the energy is protein with milk, 26% with skyr
Quality	Milk and skyr both score high on their own
GI and GL	Most of the carbohydrate: 36 g from the granola
PD	From 3.4 to 6.4, the example target, by swapping milk for skyr

Typical values. Check your own packs.

USE IT

PD 6.4 lands on the example target. PD is a ratio, so one daily target works for a snack and for a full plate.

Chef Mealan does this sum for every meal of your week:
chefmealan.com/worthy-numbers

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Hi, I'm Milan.

I'm a product and recipe builder in Munich. For about 20 years I have built software products as a product manager. I founded several startups and sold one of them, an event planning app.

I design and build Chef Mealan with AI, from the first sketch to every release, so these numbers work at every meal without a calculator in your hand. I cook every day for myself and my family, and I use these numbers on my own meals.

I'm a certified fitness and nutrition coach. I also wrote Worth Building, a playbook on product thinking in the age of AI. Chef Mealan follows its method.

Milan Stancevic

Product and recipe builder, and the maker of Chef Mealan

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Worthy Numbers is general information about food labels for healthy adults. It is not medical advice. If you have a health condition, are pregnant, or take medication that affects what you eat, talk to your doctor first. Values are typical: check your own packs.

Sources: Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 (food information) and Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006 (nutrition and health claims) · FAO, Dietary protein quality evaluation in human nutrition (2013) · University of Sydney GI database · Santé publique France, Nutri-Score.

LIVE THE DAY, SO IT COUNTS

PD helps you decide at the plate or on the go. A good day needs more than one number: calories in and out, protein, carbohydrate and fat, vitamins and minerals, an active day, strength training, sleep and recovery. Chef Mealan plans the food part of that day with you.

YOUR OWN TARGET, CALCULATED

A man of 80 kg, 182 cm

trains twice a week, wants to keep his weight

PD 6.4

2,350 kcal · 150 g protein

A woman of 66 kg, 168 cm

trains three times a week, wants to build muscle

PD 6.4

1,950 kcal · 125 g protein

- Every number shows its calculation, so you see how Chef Mealan got to it.
- A week of meals planned with you, and the shopping list for it.
- Name a craving, and Chef Mealan finds the food that makes it fit your day.



Get your personal code

Free while Chef Mealan is in beta, and spots are limited. Scan, or go to chefmealan.com/worthy-numbers to see if a spot is still open. Leave your name and email, and you get your code within a day.

Worthy Numbers is a short guide in the Worth series. Worth Building is available, and Worth Eating comes soon.