

## What's in your 'low-fat' spread?

We like to eat foods that contain fat, but we also know we shouldn't eat too much. Rather than eat butter or margarine (which contain 80-90% fat) many people now choose to eat low fat spreads which are less than 41% fat.

So what makes up the rest of the product? Low-fat spreads can be as much as half water, which is held in place by other ingredients and additives.

This is the ingredients list of a typical low fat spread. Tick the ingredients that you think are used to hold the main ingredients, water and vegetable oil, in a solid, spreadable form.

- Water
- Vegetable oil
- Maltodextrin
- Salt
- Thickener: Sodium Alginate (E401)
- Emulsifier: Mono and Di-glycerides (E471)
- Preservatives: Potassium Sorbate (E202) and Citric acid (E330)
- Vitamin E
- Flavouring
- Vitamins A and D
- Colour: Beta-Carotene (E160a)

### Information

- Maltodextrin is a starchy additive, often made from potatoes, which adds structure to low-fat spreads.
- The thickener sodium alginate is a made from seaweed and used to bind the water into the spread mixture.
- Emulsifier additives are used to make water and fat mix together evenly, and stop the spread splitting into separate watery and fatty ingredients.
- Preservative additives are used to extend the time that food can be sold for, and stop the food going smelly and rotten too quickly.
- Vitamin E is used in fatty foods to stop the fats and oils going 'rancid' - smelly, sour and disgusting.
- Flavouring additives are used to make the fat taste better.
- Vitamins A and D have to be added to vegetable fat spread by law, to make it more nutritious.
- The colouring additive Beta-Carotene gives the spread an buttery yellow look.

