

Beware of These 7 “Foods” That Aren’t Really Food



By Caroline Praderio | [Prevention](#)

Grocery stores are teeming with real-food impostors: products so full of artificial flavorings, colors, and other additives that they start to look more like science projects than [snacks](#). (And, yes, for record, we CAN believe [it's not butter](#)). Here are seven “foods” you should leave on the shelf.

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1. Cream that isn't cream

“Cream” that doesn't have to be refrigerated? Yeah right. The only thing even partially resembling dairy in most shelf-stable coffee creamers is something called sodium caseinate, a “milk derivative.” The rest of the ingredient list is usually comprised of a nutritionally empty blend of oil, sugar, and natural and artificial flavors—definitely not the best way to

start your day.

Ingredients: Water, [sugar](#), hydrogenated coconut oil, less than 2% of: sodium caseinate, dipotassium phosphate, mono- and diglycerides, salt, natural and artificial flavor.

2. Potato chips that aren't potato chips

There's a reason those tubes of stackable, crispy ovals are labeled "potato crisps" instead of "potato chips:" Some contain as little as 40% potato content—and even that comes in the form of dried potato flakes. Instead, these crisps are cut with rice flour and other starches to make up the potato-y difference. Seems kind of backwards when plenty of other chip companies are making addictively crunchy snacks by—get this—[actually slicing real potatoes](#).

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Ingredients: Dried potatoes, vegetable oil (contains one or more of the following: corn oil, cottonseed oil, soybean oil, and/or sunflower oil), rice flour, wheat starch, maltodextrin, mono- and diglycerides, salt, dextrose.

3. Cheese that's not cheese

Pick up one of those flimsy individually wrapped slices, and you'll uncover the mystery that is a "processed cheese product." True, "cheese" is usually listed as the first ingredient, but it's all the other stuff after it that gives us pause. Some brands have a total of 15 ingredients, including preservatives and emulsifiers to alter texture. Real cheese delivers the same melty deliciousness with only four.

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Ingredients: Cheddar cheese (milk, cheese culture, salt, enzymes), whey, milk, milk protein concentrate, milkfat, whey protein concentrate, sodium citrate, contains less than 2%

calcium phosphate, salt, lactic acid, annatto and paprika extract (color), natamycin (a natural mold inhibitor), enzymes, cheese culture, vitamin D3.

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