

Coconut Sugar



Artificial sweeteners and sugar substitutes can be very appealing to ladies looking to cut their calories or control blood sugar and we do get a lot of questions about them.

Generally, however, we don't recommend processed or sweetened foods or artificial sweeteners and we encourage people to break free from regular sugar consumption, but we've recently discovered

coconut palm sugar and decided to look into it.

Coconut sugar has garnered attention as being a low-carb sugar substitute that is more nutritious than typical granulated sugar. Also, because of its complex flavour it is also gaining a reputation in foodie communities and natural health food outlets

How is it made?

Pure coconut palm sugar is a natural product made from the nectar of the coconut palm tree. There are several different varieties of palm (Palmyra, date, etc.), and "coconut palm" specifically refers to the *Coccoloba nucifera* plant (in picture). The nectar is drained from the flower of the coconut tree just before the nut is formed. The delicious nectar is dehydrated and made into crystals which can be used in the same way as regular sugar.



Pure coconut palm sugar has a naturally low glycaemic index (GI) (this is a measure of how food impacts blood sugar). Studies state that it has a GI of around 35 where as normal sugar is around 64. This has led some people to claim that this is a valuable sugar substitute for people with diabetes, pre-diabetes or those looking to control blood sugar. We can now affirm that this is correct. Claire Dobson (the owner of True Women's Fitness and Well-Being) is a type 1 diabetic who regularly tests her own blood sugar levels. She has found that the coconut sugar does not spike her blood sugar levels to the same extent as normal sugar. While Claire found that her blood glucose levels did not spike as they would have with normal sugar, we urge diabetics to test this out for themselves.

The number of calories in coconut palm sugar is almost identical to the number in regular table sugar and its closer relative, brown sugar. But coconut palm sugar is notably higher in various micronutrients possibly because it is less processed than “normal” sugars.

There are a number of good reasons to consider using coconut palm sugar as a substitute for white or brown sugar in your kitchen. For us the most obvious benefit is that it tastes amazing, similar to brown sugar but with a rich complexity you do not find in industrial sugars.



Secondly, if you do have a sweet tooth and you “need your sugar fix” then substituting for coconut sugar will add vitamins, minerals and amino acids to your diet. Coconut sugar has a high mineral content, being a rich source of potassium, magnesium, zinc, and iron. In addition to this it contains Vitamin B1, B2, B3, and B6. When compared to brown sugar, coconut sugar has 36 times the iron, four times the magnesium, and over 10 times the amount of zinc. The coconut sap, from which coconut sugar is derived also, contains 16 amino acids. (Amino acids are the building blocks of protein)

Overall coconut palm sugar is a tastier and possibly healthier substitute for granulated or brown sugar. Substitute coconut palm sugar for traditional sugar at a 1:1 ratio in normal cooking and baking.

We now stock unprocessed, sustainably harvested raw coconut sugar at the club.

If you are diabetic or have other nutritional questions regarding coconut sugar, please contact claire@truwoman.co.nz

