

Natural and Artificial Sweeteners

Think Sweet



Everyone likes to add a bit of sweetness to their diet, but how much do we really know about the sweeteners we eat? How bad are artificial sweeteners, really? And if they're all that bad for us, what natural sweeteners can replace them?

If you listen to the manufacturers of chemically produced artificial sweeteners, you'll hear there's no evidence that they're unsafe.

Critics cite anecdotal evidence to the contrary, saying natural substances are best for our bodies. They say we are being used as human guinea pigs, encouraged to consume possibly unsafe products that will not be proven unsafe until after we fall victim to cancer, brain damage, or other disease.

Here you'll find a list of sweetness sources, starting with artificial sweeteners, then natural sweeteners. You'll find in the natural section I start with some highly-processed sweeteners derived from plants but chemically treated. Toward the bottom of the page you'll find some of the best natural sources of sweetness.

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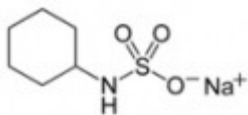
Dedication

This lens is dedicated to my friend, Angelstar, who inspired me with her article: [The Truth About Artificial Sweetener](#).

Artificial Sweeteners

Cyclamate

...banned in the USA.



The use of cyclamate in artificial sweeteners was banned in the USA in 1969 because testing associated it with bladder cancer, yet over 55 other countries still allow it to be sold. More recent testing disputes this finding, and a reapproval petition has been filed with the FDA.

The 1960s testing showed that a combination of cyclamate with saccharin caused rats to develop bladder cancer. More recent studies state that cyclamate is not a carcinogen.

Product using cyclamate: *Sucaryl*

Cyclamate Links

[Cyclamate](#)

Wikipedia page about cyclamate.

Saccharin

...banned in Canada and some other countries.



Saccharin is the common name for benzoic sulfonamide, a sweet substance providing no nutritive value. Saccharin was discovered in 1879 by chemist Constantin Fahlberg, while researching coal tar derivatives at Johns Hopkins University. It became popular during World War I sugar shortages.

In the 1970s studies associated saccharin with bladder cancer in rats. It was banned in Canada in 1977. In the USA, a warning label was added to packaging.

In 2001 the requirement of a warning label was lifted after a study showed that rats develop bladder cancer from saccharin due to a function not relevant to human beings as our urine composition is different.

Product using saccharin: *Sweet 'n Low*

Saccharin Links

[Saccharin](#)

Wikipedia page about saccharin.

Sucralose

...chlorinated sugar.



Sucralose is chlorinated sugar and is about 600 times sweeter than sugar. It is made by replacing three hydroxyl groups with three chlorine atoms. It has no nutritive value and is eliminated from the body in the same form in which it was ingested.

Sucralose is the only artificial sweetener that maintains its sweetness when heated, so it can be used in baking.

Sucralose is an organochloride and may be carcinogenic, though not all organochlorides are. It is

thought that sucralose may not be carcinogenic because it doesn't break down, dechlorinate, or accumulate in fat cells as some other organochlorides do.

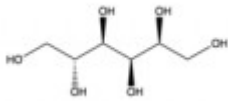
Product using sucralose: *Splenda*

Sucralose Links

[Sucralose](#)

Wikipedia page on sucralose.

Sorbitol



Another name for sorbitol is glucitol. It is a sugar alcohol used in sugar-free candies and other diet foods. It is found naturally in some fruits and berries, but normally is created through chemical processing.

Though sorbitol has some nutrient value, it also is known for numerous side effects including abdominal pain and intestinal difficulties, so products containing sorbitol should be used in moderation.

Sorbitol Links

[Sorbital](#)

Wikipedia page about sorbital.

[Sorbitol Side Effects](#)

Case histories about sorbitol side effects.

Aspartame

James M. Schlatter accidentally discovered aspartame in 1965 while researching anti-ulcer formulations for G.D. Searle & Company. It has become one of the most controversial artificial sweeteners due to its connotations with side effects such as headaches, brain tumors, brain lesions, and lymphoma.

Products using aspartame: *Equal*, *NutraSweet*, and *Canderel*.

Aspartame

Aspartame, NutraSweet, Artificial Sweetener & Diet Soda

by [psychetruth](#) | [video info](#)

Aspartame Killed My Wife

Aspartame Killed My Wife - One Mans Story
by [MikeHansonArchives](#) | [video info](#)

Aspartame Links

[Aspartame](#)

Wikipedia page about aspartame.

[Sweet Poison](#)

Sweet Poison is the site of Janet Hull, who almost died from aspartame poisoning in 1991.

[NutraSweet, Aspartame, Equal](#)

The site says: "The FDA has received more complaints about adverse reactions to aspartame than any other food ingredient in the agency's history." Learn more here.

[The Aspartame Controversy](#)

Wikipedia page about the aspartame controversy.

Natural Sweeteners

Sugar



Originally people chewed on sugar cane to enjoy a sweet treat. Then a method of crystallizing sugar was developed in India around 350AD. Sugar became a political hot-topic during the European settlement of America because sugar cane grew well on Caribbean islands. Because labor was needed, slaves were brought in from Africa. We can thank sugar cane plantation owners for starting the slave trade to the New World.

Back then sugar was worth as much as gold and it was considered a luxury. Even today it is a very popular food item, though now almost everyone can afford it. Our sugar supply is made from sugar cane or sugar beets.

A lot of illness is blamed on sugar including weight gain, diabetes, tooth decay, gout, and even cancer.

Vegans and vegetarians may shy away from sugar because about 1/4 of the sugar in the USA is refined using bone char instead of activated carbon.

An Organic Cane Sugar Factory

ORGANIC SUGAR FACTORY
by [ingridgott](#) | [video info](#)

Sugar Links

[Sugar](#)

Wikipedia article about sugar.

Corn Syrup

High-Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS) hasn't been around very long. It was first created in the 1970s and since then has become so popular, the average American consumes more HFCS than sucrose (sugar).

Corn syrup is considered by many to be extremely unhealthy for human consumption, but it is cheap and sweet, so manufacturers of processed foods keep using it.

Corn Syrup Links

[Corn Syrup](#)

Wikipedia article about corn syrup.

[The Murky World of High Fructose Corn Syrup](#)

HFCS, exposed.

[High-Fructose Corn Syrup: Not So Sweet for the Planet](#)

Corn syrup - an environmental disaster?

Crystalline Fructose

Crystalline fructose isn't the same thing as high-fructose corn syrup. Some people have the two products mixed up. Fructose is found in corn syrup, but corn syrup also contains glucose.

Crystalline fructose is also called fruit sugar. According to the website of the Fructose Information Center, fructose is created by extracting cornstarch from corn kernels which through processing is "enzymatically transformed to fructose."

Crystalline Fructose Links

[Fructose](#)

Wikipedia article about fructose.

[Fructose Information Center](#)

Fructose information from the people who want you to buy some.

[Fructose - Maybe Not So Natural...and Not So Safe](#)

This 1995 article seems to confuse fructose with high-fructose corn syrup, yet contains a lot of information about medical side-effects.

[Fructose](#)

A doctor's comments about medical side-effects of fruit sugar (fructose).

Why Sugar / Corn Syrup / Fructose are poisons ...

...very bad for your body!!

This is state-of-the-art scientific information!! It isn't fats that make people fat -- it is fructose. Our bodies need glucose and fiber, not fructose.

The Hazards of Sugar (Part 2 of 9)

by [mercola](#) | [video info](#)

Maple Syrup Production

Making Maple Syrup

by [tobyot](#) | [video info](#)

Making Maple Syrup Part II

by [tobyot](#) | [video info](#)

Maple Syrup Links

[Maple Syrup](#)

Wikipedia page on Maple syrup.

[Do More With Maple Syrup - Quebec Maple Syrup Producers](#)

Chef Daniel LaGarde inspires us to do more with maple syrup with his Quebec Maple recipes.

Agave Nectar

Agave nectar (also called Agave syrup) is produced in Mexico from several varieties of the Agave plant. The juice is extracted, then filtered, heated, and concentrated. Agave contains iron, calcium, potassium, and magnesium. It is composed of fructose and glucose.

Agave dissolves in cold water and is perfect for sweetening iced tea. It is especially popular with vegans, who use it as a honey replacement.

The Agave Harvest

The Agave Harvest

by [MadhavaAgave](#) | [video info](#)

Agave Nectar Extraction

by | [video info](#)

Agave Production

Wholesome Sweeteners Organic Agave
by [wholesweet](#) | [video info](#)

Agave Syrup Links

[Agave Syrup](#)

Wikipedia article about Agave syrup.

Rice Syrup

Rice syrup has become very popular during the last few years. I find rice syrup listed as an ingredient in energy bars like [Clif Bars](#) - a healthful alternative to processed cane sugar. I also have no trouble finding it on my local supermarket shelves.

Rice Syrup Links

[Brown Rice Syrups](#)

Brown Rice Syrups are one of the best alternatives to tame the roller coaster ride of your blood-sugar levels while continuing to pamper your sweet tooth.

[Organic Rice Syrup](#)

Rice Syrup is sweet stuff indeed that leaves you with no bitter worries for health because when you pour it over your pancakes remember you are getting the equivalent sweetness of half that amount of white sugar.

[Sweet Savvy: Natural Sweetener Recipes](#)

Debra's Natural Desserts: It's Okay to Eat Sweets

Stevia



Stevia is a plant native to tropical Central and South America. It is also called sweetleaf and sugarleaf.

It is available in stores as a white powder or as a liquid extract, but whole foods proponents recommend that consumers use green or brown whole-plant extracts and powders. They say the other Stevia products are too refined and lack essential phyto-nutrients. When too concentrated, Stevia can have a bitter aftertaste.

Stevia - South American Herb

Stevia

by [nofunclub](#) | [video info](#)

Stevia Links

[Stevia](#)

Wikipedia page about Stevia.

[Stevia Information](#)

Information about Stevia, Stevia recipes, Stevia news articles, Stevia Rebaudiana research studies, and Stevia comparisons.

[Life With Stevia: How Sweet It Is!](#)

Nutritional and medicinal uses of Stevia.

Honey



Honey is the pure product of honey bees. Nothing is added to it, however it is often processed with heat treatments and not completely natural.

True organic honey is rare because bees may be gathering nectar from plants treated with pesticides. Also beekeepers often use inorganic substances. For example, they may kill the bees with calcium cyanide before gathering the honey. Carbolic acid is used to remove the honey from the hive. Also beekeepers treat bee diseases with antibiotics and sulfa.

Supermarket honey has usually been processed with heat to make the honey clear and unclouded. This 'ultrafiltration' process destroys nutrients such as enzymes.

Colony Collapse Disorder

The Disappearing Honey Bees: Beekeepers on What's Happening

by [GaiamSearch](#) | [video info](#)

Honey Links

[Honey](#)

Wikipedia page on honey.

[Help The Honey Bees](#)

About Colony Collapse Disorder... and what we can do to help.

Date Sugar



To make date sugar, simply dehydrate dates, then grind them. They are nutritious and delicious. Date sugar is excellent in oatmeal or in any recipe where brown sugar is used.

Date Sugar Links

[Dates and Date Sugar](#)

Lots of recipes using date sugar.

Fruit Juice



One last suggestion: fruit juices. Many juices are useful in baking and for sweetening smoothies and other drinks. Apple sauce is also added to muffins and other baked goods for sweetness.

Thanks for visiting my lens ...



I hope this page is helpful for people deciding what sweetener best suits their needs. My sweetener of choice is Maple syrup, which I like for its taste, nutrients, and convenience.

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More Reference Links

[The Truth About Artificial Sweetener](#)

Here's the truth about artificial sweeteners and the side effects they cause.

[Sugar Substitutes](#)

Wikipedia page about sugar substitutes, both natural and artificial.

[HowStuffWorks "Top 10 Most Common Ingredients in Fast Food"](#)

Some of the most common fast food ingredients are citric acid, xanthan gum and caramel color. Learn about the top 10 most common ingredients in fast food.

Country Kitchen Pantry

...my blog.

[Simple Salsa and My Mexican Food Experience](#)

I love Mexican food - especially vegetarian bean burritos!

[Codex Alimentarius Natural Health Freedoms Threat](#)

Codex alimentarius - how will it affect natural health freedoms?

[Herbs and pregnancy - what to use and what not to use](#)

Herbs safe to use during pregnancy, and those dangerous to use while pregnant.

[Herbed Pasta](#)

Herbed pasta is easy to make and a favorite of vegetarians everywhere.

[Cleaning The Pantry](#)

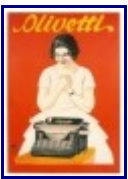
Cleaning the pantry helps revitalize the country kitchen.

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[Writing Topics from A to Z](#)

Ever felt writing-obsessed? If you're a writer, most likely you'll identify with that term. We who write are usually thinking or learning about writing when we're not actually doing some writing. I like to write novels, but in my spare time I write... [view lens](#)



[Ten New Lenses by LindaJM](#)

Only the newest, the fledgling, the fresh out of the box lenses made by me, LindaJM. This page shows the lenses I've made most recently. Often I've gone to bio pages of other lensmasters and wondered what they've done most recently. This lens is my... [view lens](#)



[An American Citizen's Lensography](#)

We're such a diverse bunch of people, I don't think anyone can narrow it down to what exactly American citizens think of their country, their government, their land. So take this as just one solitary American citizen crying out in the midst o... [view lens](#)



[Geniyyah's Lensography](#)

Geniyyah is my name - spirituality is my game. Well, not a game, but definitely an aspiration. I seek expanded consciousness and the ability to benefit the world through my awareness of love. [view lens](#)