

SUGAR

Sweet Tooth / Bitter Truth. SWEETENERS – WHAT ARE THEY? How do we navigate the endless maze of sugars and sugar replacements.

Lets start off with identifying the most common sugars:

White Sugar: Made from sugarcane, beets or corn, although most unlabeled sugar is from corn, and now, increasingly, beets. Highly refined and processed, usually from genetically modified (GMO) crops, and contains no nutrients or minerals. It is frequently bleached thru bone



Brown Sugar: White sugar with molasses added back in.



Molasses: Unsulphered/Blackstrap molasses – made from the last pressing of sugarcane. It is dark and intensely flavored with high mineral content (especially high in iron).



Sucanat: Sucanat is a brand name for an organic evaporated cane-juice product that has been blended with organic molasses. Sucanat looks like coarse brown beach sand and has a very mild, brown sugar-like taste. It can be used like white sugar. Sucanat retains more of the vitamins and minerals of the sugar cane.

Date Sugar: Made from 100% pitted and dehydrated dates, that are then coarsely ground. Contains all the nutrients of dates. Important to get organic, since dates often contain pesticides and sulfites. Works best for things like cinnamon toast and crumb toppings as it does not dissolve easily.



Honey: Produced by bees who gather nectar with enzymes, place it into the hive, and dehydrate it in their stomachs (raw honey is 1.2-1.8 times sweeter than sugar). Raw (non-pasteurized) honey contains more vitamins and fiber.



Maple Syrup: Comes from the sap of sugar maple trees. The sap is boiled down to produce syrup. The timing of when sap is harvested determines the color and the flavor (early winter [A] is lighter and milder; late winter [B] is darker and stronger). Important to get organic, as formaldehyde pellets can be used in processing of non-organic maple syrup.



Coconut Sugar: Produced from the juices of the coconut palm blossoms. The nectar is collected and heated until it is dried and caramelized. Then it is pulverized into a powder that looks much like brown sugar. It is a great low-glycemic sweetener full of fiber, vitamins and minerals. It can replace regular sugar in recipes one-to-one.



Dates: A natural fruit from a date palm tree. They are fat-free and packed with fiber, antioxidants and minerals such as iron and potassium. Dates can be soaked and blended to use as a natural sweetener in baked goods and desserts.



Agave: A natural sweetener made from the juice of the agave cactus. It is a Natural High Fructose concentrate obtained by natural physical processes of extraction and purification of agave extract juice. It is sweeter than refined sugar (approximately 1.4 times sweeter). Fructose does not stimulate digestive insulin secretion as do other sugars. It is less disturbing to the glycemic index.



Xylitol: A sugar alcohol made from tree fiber or corncobs. It has components that do not break down in the small intestine. For this reason, xylitol can cause bowel issues. It is low on the glycemic index and helps to prevent tooth decay. Keep it to a minimum, using only in small quantities or in chewing gum.



Stevia: From a plant (Stevia rebaudiana), found mostly in South America. It is much sweeter than sugar, but cannot be metabolized by our digestive tract, so it is essentially noncaloric. Stevia is available in several forms, including powdered leaves and liquid concentrates. Refined white powder stevia concentrates can be up to 300 times sweeter than sugar. It can impart a bitter taste. Start with a little and taste as you go.

