



Chia: Little Seed, Big Health Benefits

Easy to use, easily digested, chia seeds are an incredible nutritional powerhouse.

A member of the mint family, chia seeds were a staple of the Aztec and Mayan diet and revered for their ability to increase energy and maintain stamina. These tiny seeds — they're only about a millimeter long — are white or gray and brown in color and grown in Mexico, Central America and Australia. Today, chia seeds are celebrated for their many health benefits — from heart health to weight loss management.

Chia seeds are gems for the vegan and vegetarian diet — they have concentrated amounts of omega 3 fatty acids, essential nutrients that we need to keep cells in top condition, as well as well as significant levels of calcium, protein, iron, and fiber.

Chia seeds are mild tasting and because of their tiny size, soften easily in liquid, and needn't be ground before eating raw (they can be ground into flour, however). Like other seeds and nuts, they should be stored in a cool, dry place in a tightly-sealed bag or container. To prolong their freshness, freeze larger amounts and refrigerate smaller portions for daily use.



TEN WAYS TO ENJOY CHIA:

There are many delicious ways to use chia seeds — add them to your morning cereal or top off a salad with a sprinkle of seeds; add them to batters or bread dough. And if that's not enough, try these 10 additional ways to enjoy chia:

- 1) Use as an egg substitute. For the equivalent of 1 egg, take 1 tablespoon of chia seeds and mix with 3 tablespoons hot water. Let sit for 5-10 minutes — mixture will become gelatinous. Stir and use as you would a raw egg in baking.
- 2) Use as a substitute for cornstarch or flour to thicken soups and stews. First, create a chia gel by mixing 2 tablespoons of chia seeds in 1 cup water and let “bloom” (approximately 5 to 10 minutes) then stir into your soup 1 tablespoon at a time, adding as much as you need for desired consistency.
- 3) Purée with fruit and a small amount of fruit juice and use as a topping for ice cream.
- 4) Make a creamy pudding: In a bowl, stir together 2/3 cup chia seeds, 2 cups soy or almond milk, and ½ teaspoon real vanilla extract. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Before serving, stir well and top with dried or fresh fruit.
- 5) Blend chia seeds into your breakfast smoothie.



- 6) Mix chia seeds with whole wheat or sorghum flour and your favorite seasonings and use as a breading for tofu, chicken or fish.
- 7) Add chia seeds to veggie burger mixtures for extra crunch.
- 8) Add chia seeds to your favorite pasta sauce. Or, for a sauce change up, blend steamed cauliflower with a little vegetable stock and a few tablespoons of chia seeds. Serve warm sauce over whole-wheat pasta or brown rice; or use the sauce in casserole recipes.
- 9) Mix 1 tablespoon of chia seeds into 4 tablespoons of your favorite spread — peanut or almond butters, jams, or cream cheese — to make a delicious toast topper.
- 10) Mix toasted and ground chia seeds with honey and cinnamon, spread onto filo dough, roll up tightly; cut into ¼ – ½-inch segments and arrange on a baking tray; bake in a 400°F oven for 10 to 12 minutes. Serve warm.

The more you use chia seeds, the more ways you'll find to enjoy them!

Did You Know?

A one-ounce serving (2½ tablespoons) of chia seeds has:

2.5 times the omega-3 ALA than a one-ounce serving of walnuts?

2.5 times more iron than one cup of raw spinach?

2 times more fiber than a one-half cup serving of oatmeal?

almost the same amount of calcium as one cup of cottage cheese?

75% of the protein found in an egg?