

Replacing refined sugar with unrefined sweeteners

We've provided a chart to help you calculate how to replace refined white sugar in recipes you love. However, some natural sweeteners can affect the taste, moisture content and acidity of your recipes. Consult a natural foods cookbook or alternative baking website for advice on which sweeteners work best as substitutes in which applications.

SWEETENERS EQUIVALENT TO ONE CUP OF SUGAR

Sweetener	Amount to replace one cup sugar	Reduce liquid by
Barley malt	1-1/4 cup	1/4 cup
Brown rice syrup	1-1/4 cup	1/4 cup
Date sugar	2/3 cup	none
Fruit sweeteners	1 cup	1/4 cup
Honey	1/2 cup	1/4 cup
Maple syrup	1/2-2/3 cup	1/4 cup
Molasses	1/2 cup	none
Stevia	1 teaspoon	none
Sucanat	1 cup	none
Turbinado	1 cup	none

Resources

American Heart Association

Sugar 101
www.heart.org

Mayo Clinic

Added sugar: Don't get sabotaged by sweeteners
www.mayoclinic.org

PCC Natural Markets

A Guide to Natural Sweeteners
www.pccnaturalmarkets.com/guides/tips_sweeteners.html

Morning Apple Crumble

Serving Size: 8

2 1/2 pounds tart apples (such as Braeburn or Granny Smith)
 2 tablespoons raisins
 2 tablespoons lemon juice
 1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons honey, divided
 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
 1 teaspoon ground ginger, divided
 Salt
 2 cups rolled oats
 1/2 cup roughly chopped pecans
 1/4 cup gluten-free flour mix
 1/4 cup shredded coconut
 6 tablespoons butter, cut into small pieces

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease or butter a 9 x 9-inch glass baking dish.

Core, peel and cut the apples into bite-sized pieces. In a large bowl, gently toss the apples with raisins, lemon juice, 2 tablespoons honey, cinnamon, 1/2 teaspoon ginger and a pinch of salt. Spread the apple mixture evenly in the bottom of the baking dish.

In a large bowl, mix together the oats, pecans, flour, coconut, 1/2 teaspoon ginger and a pinch of salt. Cut in the butter and 1/4 cup of honey with the rest of the ingredients to make a crumbly mixture. Spread mixture evenly over the top of the apples, then place in oven and bake for 45 minutes or until bubbling and the topping is golden brown and crisp.

Serving Suggestion





Serve warm or cold topped with a spoonful of yogurt. You can also substitute dried cranberries or cherries for the raisins.



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Refined sugars

and corn syrup may be the most commonly used sweeteners in the United States, but there are numerous natural alternatives that can be used to sweeten foods, many of which do not have the same negative effects on metabolism and mood that refined sugars can have.

Refined sugars vs. unrefined sweeteners

The process of refining, when referring to sugar, means that everything except the sugar (whether fructose, sucrose or glucose) in a plant is removed. In the case of common white granulated sugar, the fiber, nutrients and water are removed from the sugar cane or sugar beet to leave just the concentrated sugar crystals. Once isolated, these crystals are combined with water and chemicals are added to extract “impurities,” or remaining bits of plant material. The impurities are removed with the water and the result is pure white, crystalline sugar with no nutritive value.

In contrast, unrefined foods still contain their original nutrients and have not been chemically bleached. They may be processed, as when tree sap is boiled to make concentrated maple syrup, but they have not been stripped of nutritional value or coloring.

A guide to sweeteners

For the purpose of comparison, “sugar” refers to refined white granulated cane or beet sugar.

Agave syrup (or nectar) is an unrefined liquid sweetener made by cooking down the juice of the agave cactus. It has a mild, neutral flavor and is about 1.5 times sweeter than sugar. Agave can be used like honey and is great for sweetening hot and cold beverages since it dissolves quickly.

Barley malt syrup is an unrefined liquid sweetener made from sprouted grains of barley that are kiln-dried and cooked with water. It has a rich malt flavor and is about half as sweet as sugar.

Brown rice syrup is an unrefined liquid sweetener made from brown rice that has been cultured with enzymes, strained and then cooked down to a thick syrup. It has a mild flavor and is half as sweet as sugar.

Brown sugar is a refined sweetener made from white sugar (from sugar cane or sugar beets) that has a bit of molasses added back after refinement. It is moist and has the same sweetness as sugar, with a mild caramel flavor.

Coconut sugar (or coconut palm sugar) is an unrefined sweetener made from the sap of flower buds from coconut palm trees. It is about half as sweet as sugar and has a nutty, caramel flavor. It is best used as a substitute for brown sugar.

Corn syrup is a refined liquid sweetener made from corn kernels. Corn syrup is approximately as sweet as sugar. High fructose corn syrup is made by an additional refining process that splits the two components of corn syrup, fructose and glucose, to create a higher fructose content. It is commonly used in processed foods and beverages because it costs less than sugar.

Date sugar is an unrefined dry sweetener made from dehydrated, ground dates. It has the same sweetness as sugar but it does not dissolve well in liquids. It is fine for cooking or baking, especially to replace brown sugar.



Fruit juice sweeteners (also called fructose) are refined sweeteners made from the juice of grapes, apples or pears, even corn. They are equivalent in sweetness to sugar. Fruit juice sweeteners are often used to sweeten beverages, fruit snacks and other foods. Although marketed as a healthy alternative to sugar, they are often refined to the point of having no nutritive value.

Honey is an unrefined liquid sweetener with a distinctive flavor that is slightly sweeter than sugar. Honey is produced by honeybees that take nectar from flowers and transform it; there are as many types of honey as there are flowers! Darker varieties of honey contain more minerals and have a stronger flavor than lighter ones.

Most honey is pasteurized (heated) to kill bacteria and prevent crystals from forming, but this also takes away some of its nutritional value. You can purchase raw honey that is minimally processed to remove beeswax and make it pourable but that has not been pasteurized. You can also find unprocessed honey still on the comb.

Maple syrup is an unrefined liquid sweetener with a distinctive flavor that is made by boiling the sap of maple trees down into a syrup. It has approximately the same sweetness as sugar, but has a higher mineral content and contains antioxidants. Though it has become world famous as a pancake syrup, maple syrup is native to North America and nearly all of it is produced here.

Molasses is a thick liquid sweetener that is a byproduct of the manufacture of sugar from sugar cane. Molasses is available in light, medium and blackstrap varieties. Light molasses is the residue from the first extraction of sugar and is the sweetest. Medium molasses is from the second extraction and is darker and less sweet. Blackstrap molasses is the final residue and is very dark and only slightly sweet with a distinctive flavor. Blackstrap molasses is a very good source of calcium and iron. Unsulphured molasses indicates that no sulphur was used in the refining process.

Powdered sugar (confectioner’s or icing sugar) is made from refined white sugar that is ground very fine; cornstarch or calcium phosphate is added to keep it from clumping.

Sorghum is an unrefined thick liquid sweetener made from sweet sorghum, a grain related to millet and similar in appearance to corn. The juice from the plant is extracted and boiled down to a syrup. It has a flavor and texture similar to that of molasses.

Stevia is a perennial plant native to Brazil that is traditionally used as a sweetener in beverages. It does not contain any sugar, but has a flavor that is 30+ times sweeter than sugar. Fresh and dried leaves can be used as an unrefined sweetener in hot or cold beverages. Liquid stevia extracts and powders are highly refined and calorie-free, they do not have any nutritive value.

Sugar is a refined sweetener made from the juice of sugar cane or sugar beets. It is the most popular sweetener around the world. Sugar beets are one of the top 10 most commonly genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in the United States; food labels may distinguish between cane sugar and beet sugar but are not required to by law.

Sugar cane juice (or sucanat) is an unrefined sweetener made by mechanically extracting the juice from the whole sugar cane and dehydrating it. The molasses has not been extracted and the resulting solids retain a stronger caramel flavor and brown coloring. This sweetener goes by many names, as it is used in many parts of the world where sugar cane is abundant. Sugar cane juice can be sold as a dry or moist sugar and comes in block, liquid or crystalline forms.

Turbinado (also called demerara or raw sugar) is a semi-refined sugar made from cane juice that has been refined except for the last extraction of molasses. It is as sweet as sugar and looks like larger, tan sugar crystals.