

Cooking with Coconut Oil

Coconut oil has been used throughout Asia and the Pacific for thousands of years as both a food and a medicine. Even today it holds a highly respected position in the Ayurvedic medicine of India. Only recently has modern medical research confirmed the many health benefits traditionally attributed to this remarkable oil.

Once mistakenly thought to be bad because of its saturated fat content, coconut oil is now known to contain a unique form of saturated fat that actually helps prevent heart disease, stroke, and hardening of the arteries. The saturated fat in coconut oil is unlike the fat found in meat or other vegetable fats. It is identical to a special group of fats found in human breast milk.

Fats derived from coconut oil, are now routinely used in hospital IV formulations and commercial baby formulas. They're also used in sports drinks to boost energy and enhance athletic performance.

New research points to coconut oil as a healthy alternative to the many processed fats on the market.

Natural (Virgin) Coconut oil that hasn't been hydrogenated is actually a very healthy addition to your diet. The saturated fats in coconut oil are primarily medium-chain fats, which are more easily converted into energy in the body than their long-chain counterparts.

Coconut oil also has numerous benefits that other cooking oils don't. It contains lauric acid, capric acid and caprylic acid, which can naturally protect you from bacteria and viruses. They also prevent yeast and fungal imbalances in the body.

One fact that makes coconut oil stand out from other cooking oils is that it has a very long shelf life. Coconut oil doesn't need to be altered with preservatives or refined with chemicals to remain fresh—unrefined virgin coconut oil can stay on the shelf for months and even years without turning rancid.

Coconut oil's fat is not damaged by high heat, and few oils can boast the same. In fact, many cooking oils that boast of healthfulness can actually be unhealthy if heated to high temperatures. Cooking with coconut oil ensures your oil stays in its natural, healthy state.

The ability to withstand heat makes coconut oil ideal for stir fry dishes and sautéing vegetables. Try sautéing chopped fresh garlic with coconut oil to use as a topping for baked potatoes or French bread. You may be worried about coconut oil's flavor not complimenting vegetable and meat dishes, but if you're buying quality coconut oil you'll find its taste will complement all kinds of foods.

You can also use coconut oil as a substitute for oil and butter in recipes for muffins, cookies and cakes. In sweetened recipes, you can often reduce the amount of sugar used when you add coconut oil because of its delicate, pleasant flavor.

Coconut oil can give smoothies a rich, decadent texture. You can use it in place of butter on toast, waffles and pancakes, too. Some people enjoy the health benefits of coconut oil so much they find some very creative ways of using it, such as adding a teaspoon to a cup of coffee or tea. Coconut oil also works great for popping popcorn.

Coconut oil has been called the "healthiest dietary oil on earth." If you're not using coconut oil for your daily cooking and body care needs you're missing out on one of nature's most amazing health products.

Since cooking and heating will destroy the micronutrients (e.g. Vitamin E) it is not necessary to buy the higher priced Virgin Coconut Oil like Premium Grade VCO or ANH-VCO. Buy the lower grade Natural (Virgin) Coconut Oil for cooking which is about 30-40% cheaper.