



June 2013 - Stevia – a healthier alternative to sugar

What is Stevia?

Stevia Rebaudiana is an herb in the Chrysanthemum family which grows wild as a small shrub in parts of Paraguay and Brazil. The glycosides in its leaves account for its incredible sweetness, making it unique among the 300 species of Stevia plants.

There are indications that Stevia has been used to sweeten a native beverage since Pre-Columbian times.

It is gluten free, safe for diabetics and as well as this, is suitable for vegans and vegetarians. It is almost calorie free and can replace refined sugar and sweeteners, as stevia is natural and has none of sugar's unhealthy drawbacks.

It will not raise blood sugar levels or affect the glycemic index and apparently, according to the tests conducted by Purdue University's Dental Science Research Group, is fluoride compatible and significantly inhibits the development of plaque, therefore helping to prevent cavities. Stevia is sold under the brand name of Truvia in many supermarkets in England including ASDA, Morrisons, Tesco, Waitrose and Sainsburys in sachets or jars.



FOOD SCIENCE

Why (added) sugar is bad for you

Sugar is half glucose and half fructose. The fructose can't be metabolized by any organ apart from the liver. When large amounts of fructose enter the liver and it is already full of glycogen, most of the fructose gets turned into fat.

'Empty calories' - most products with added sugars in them contain very little nutrients and can therefore be classified as empty calories.

Consuming a large part of calories as fructose (25%+) harms blood lipids and causes features characteristic of the metabolic syndrome which can lead towards obesity, heart disease, diabetes and a short lifetime of poor health. Fructose is in fruit sugars, processed smoothies and other processed foods.

Sugar causes insulin resistance leading to type 2 diabetes.

Sugar raises the bad cholesterol, triglycerides and causes various other issues that can lead to heart disease.



Oatmeal Raisin Cookies - 18 cookies

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup raisins (packed)
- 5 ounces apple juice
- 1/3 cup raw cashews or walnuts (coarsely ground)
- 1/4 cup soy flour
- 1/2 cup butter or margarine (softened)
- 3/4 tsp stevia extract
- 1/2 tsp maple flavouring
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 large egg
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1 1/2 cups rolled oats
- 1 cup whole wheat pastry flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp salt

Method

- Preheat oven to 375 degrees and oil greaseproof paper
- Simmer the raisins and apple juice in a small pan over low heat for 15 minutes.
- Coarsely grind cashews or walnuts in a blender. In a mixing bowl, cream the cashews or walnuts and soy flour into the softened butter (or margarine). Stir in the stevia, maple flavouring, vanilla, and slightly beaten egg.
- Cream 1/3 of the stewed raisins and all of the juice in a blender. Set the rest of the raisins aside.
- Stir the creamed raisins into the butter mixture before adding the milk and oats.
- Sift together the wheat flour, baking soda, cinnamon and salt. Stir the flour into the other ingredients and add the rest of the

The glucose in sugar causes decreased blood flow to the area in the brain called the hypothalamus which regulates our food intake. Fructose causes an increased blood flow to this area which leads to the feeling of being unsatisfied and still hungry.

Fructose does not reduce levels of the hunger hormone ghrelin as glucose does. The more ghrelin, the hungrier you are.

When we eat sugar, dopamine is released in the brain, giving us the feeling of pleasure which is how drugs such as cocaine work. Due to its powerful effects on the reward system in the brain, sugar can lead to classic signs of addiction.

Leptin is a hormone secreted by our fat cells. The more fat we have, the more leptin is secreted. This is supposed to function as a signal to tell the brain that we are full and need to stop eating, as well as raising our energy expenditure. Fructose blocks the action of leptin.

Diana regularly provides talks for various groups and has spoken on key issues at UK and international health conferences, please view www.dianawright.co.uk/about.html for more detailed information.

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- raisins.
- Drop onto greaseproof paper sheet and flatten with the palm of the hand. Bake 13-15 minutes.



Banana Bread

1 loaf - 12 servings

Ingredients

2 very ripe, medium to large bananas
1/4 tsp powdered stevia extract
1/2 tsp stevia concentrate
1 tbsp lemon juice
2 cups whole wheat pastry flour
1/2 tsp baking soda
1 tsp baking powder
1/4 tsp salt
1/3 cup oil
1 large egg
1/2 cup plain non-fat yogurt
1 tsp vanilla extract
1/2 cup chopped walnuts (optional)
Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Oil a medium-sized loaf pan (7 1/2 " x 3 1/2 " x 2 1/2")

Method

- Mash the bananas in a small bowl. Mix the stevia extract, stevia concentrate, and lemon juice into the mashed bananas. Set aside.
- Sift the flour, baking soda, and salt together in a bowl.
- Beat the oil and egg together in a mixing bowl until creamy. Beat in the yogurt and the vanilla. Stir the mashed bananas into the liquid mixture.
- Fold the dry ingredients into the wet

ingredients, stirring as little as possible. Mix in the walnuts just before the flour is completely blended.

- Place into the loaf pan. Bake for 50 minutes to 1 hour until a toothpick or fork stuck in the middle comes out clean. Turn out the loaf and cool on a rack.



White Chocolate Mousse with Raspberry Sauce

Serving Size: 1/2 cup (4 oz) - Total Servings: 4 (2 cups total)

Ingredients

3/4 cup heavy cream
1/2 tsp vanilla extract
1/4 tsp stevia extract
1 (4 oz) bar of baking white chocolate, chopped
1/3 cup plain low-fat yogurt

Method

- Whip heavy cream in electric mixer for about 1 minute before mixing in vanilla and stevia extracts until stiff peaks form.
- Melt white chocolate in microwave at 50% power for about 1 1/2 minutes. Stir white chocolate until completely dissolved.
- Add to half of cream/ stevia mixture and blend. Refrigerate the white chocolate/cream mixture in one bowl and the remaining whipped cream in a separate bowl for about 15 minutes.
- Remove bowls from fridge and add yogurt to remaining whipped cream and whip with electric mixer until stiff peaks form.
- Gently fold yogurt/cream mixture into white chocolate/cream mixture.

Place in dessert cups or ramekins and refrigerate for 2 to 3 hours. Keep up to 2 days in refrigerator.

It takes us 4 hours to wake up apparently!
Amersham nutritionist Diana Wright tells @iainlee why. She comes prepared!
twitter.com/BBC3CR/status/...
BBC Three Counties (@BBC3CR) September 13, 2012

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