

Recent research has verified traditional beliefs that coconut and virgin coconut oil, like other pure, whole foods, have a significant role to play in a well-balanced, nutritious diet.

Is coconut oil a secret ingredient to weight loss?



Coconut and coconut oil

MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

At one time, coconut oil received bad publicity because of its high level of saturated fat, which raises blood cholesterol and contributes to heart disease. However, most tests were performed on hydrogenated coconut oil, not on virgin coconut oil.

Most dietary guidelines say that all saturated fat is bad. But newer research shows that some saturated fat is, in fact, necessary for human health. Modern research shows that the medium-chain fatty acids (like those found in coconut oil) help increase metabolism and are more easily digested than fats found in other oils. This is because they are processed directly in the liver and immediately converted into energy.

BENEFITS OF COCONUT OIL

- Refined cooking oils tend to be very unstable and turn rancid (oxidize) quickly. Oxidized oils are toxic to the body and can cause widespread free-radical damage. Virgin coconut oil, on the other hand, will not go rancid for at least several years, even at room temperatures in the tropics.
- The fatty acids in coconut oil do not raise serum cholesterol or contribute to heart disease like the long-chain triglycerides found in seed oils. In fact, studies show that virgin coconut oil actually increases good (HDL) cholesterol.
- Saturated fatty acids (such as those in coconut oil) constitute at least 50 percent of cell membranes, giving our cells firmness and integrity. (You can even use coconut oil directly on your skin to help prevent wrinkles.) Research indicates that 50 percent of our dietary fat intake should be saturated for calcium to be effectively incorporated into the skeletal structure for healthy bones.
- Coconut is among the healthiest oils you can consume. It is rich in lauric acid, which is antiviral, antibacterial and antifungal and helps strengthen the immune system, protects the digestive tract from harmful microorganisms and guards the liver against toxins. In fact, lauric acid is found in human mother's milk.
- Saturated 18-carbon stearic acid and 16-carbon palmitic acid — both found in virgin coconut oil — are good for your heart, which in times of stress draws on a reserve of highly saturated fat that surrounds it.



COCONUT AND THE LOW-CARB DIET

“When people go on a low-carb diet, they are working to get rid of the carbs that quickly turn to sugar, which turns to fat,” says Cherie Calbom, author of *The Coconut Diet*. “But few low-carb gurus point to the fats that turn to fat. The right fats are equally as important as the right carbs!”

“The weight loss secret of coconut oil is in the chain — the chain of molecules that make up the fat of coconut oil. The shorter-chain fatty acids that dominate coconut oil are known as medium-chain triglycerides (MCTs). They burn up quickly in the body. They’re a lot like adding kindling to a fire, rather than a big damp log!

“Following rapid breakdown and absorption in the intestinal tract,” Calbom continues, “MCTs are transported directly to the liver. Once there, they freely enter the mitochondria (the energy-producing elements of the cell) and are rapidly converted to ketones, which are almost immediately converted into energy. On the other hand, long-chain triglycerides (LCTs), which compose most other oils, are transported from the intestines as chylomicrons (relatively large fat droplets). They are eventually dumped into the bloodstream near the heart through the thoracic duct. These fat droplets must then be transported through the entire body before they reach the liver.

“This difference in metabolism means that the body treats MCTs in a completely different manner than the way it deals with other fats. LCTs are slow to be metabolized in the body, and as a result, are more easily stored as fat. MCTs, on the other hand, rapidly burn for energy use, thus are less likely to contribute to fat storage. If you consider your body’s metabolism to be like an oil furnace, eating LCTs is like adding oil to the storage tank, whereas consuming MCTs is like pumping fuel from the delivery truck right into the furnace. Less is stored; more is burned.

“The fatty acid chains in polyunsaturated oils are LCTs, while the fatty acid chains in coconut oil are MCTs,” she says. “It has been known for a long time in the scientific community that LCTs tend to produce fat in the body, while MCTs promote weight loss. People in the animal feed business have known this truth for quite some time as well. If you feed animals vegetable oils, they put on weight and produce more meat. If you feed them coconut oil, they will be very lean and active.” >>

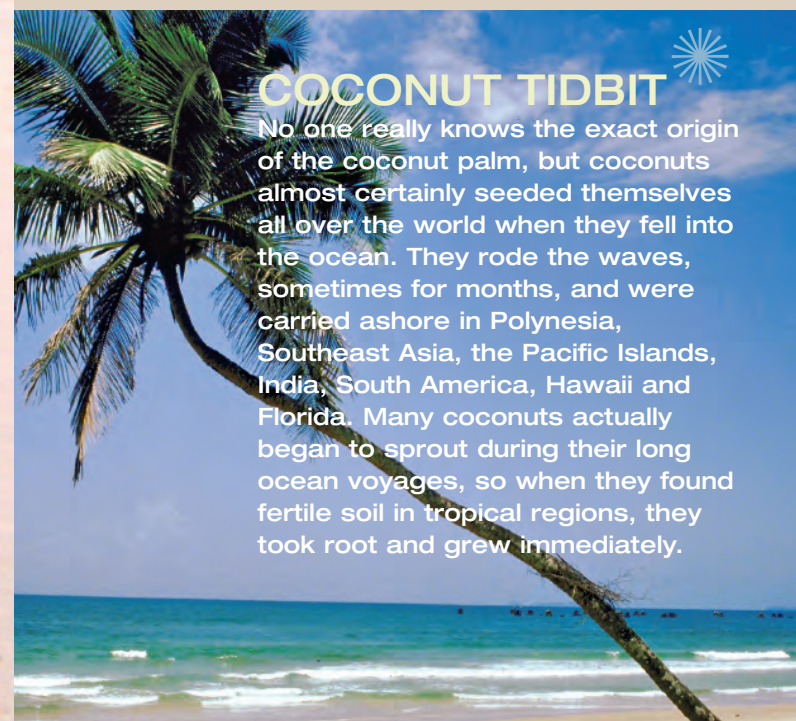
HOW THE COCONUT GOT ITS NAME



Spanish and Portuguese explorers named the round fruit **coco**, their word for **goblin**, because they thought the eyes at the base of the inner shell looked like the grinning face of a goblin.

COCONUT TIDBIT

No one really knows the exact origin of the coconut palm, but coconuts almost certainly seeded themselves all over the world when they fell into the ocean. They rode the waves, sometimes for months, and were carried ashore in Polynesia, Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, India, South America, Hawaii and Florida. Many coconuts actually began to sprout during their long ocean voyages, so when they found fertile soil in tropical regions, they took root and grew immediately.



If it doesn't smell like coconuts, should I buy it?

"It depends on [why you're going to] purchase coconut oil," says author of *Virgin Coconut Oil* Brian Shilhavy. "Coconut oil in its most natural state definitely has a distinct smell and taste. If it is lacking, it has been deodorized. In most cases, this is done when the coconut oil is made from standard copra, which is often not handled cleanly and needs to be 'cleaned up.' The entire process is known as refined, bleached and deodorized (RBD). The good thing about RBD coconut oil is that the basic fatty acid structure remains intact and is not damaged by the refining process. Many people do not like the smell or taste of coconut oil, but want to use a healthy oil. Refined coconut oils are still a better alternative to most other refined dietary oils on the market, particularly those that contain trans fatty acids.

HOW MUCH COCONUT OIL IS ENOUGH?

Dr. Mary Enig and Sally Fallon, authors of *Eat Fat Lose Fat*, suggest the average adult diet should include about **3.5 tablespoons** of coconut oil per day.

"The highest quality coconut oils, however, are those with the least amount of refining, and these coconut oils most definitely have a distinct taste and scent. The reason for this scent and taste is that fresh coconuts are the starting material to extract the oil. If the oil does not undergo further refining, the scent and taste will remain. These 'virgin' coconut oils are the closest to nature and have more of their natural nutrients intact."

RECIPES

5 Homemade Coconut Milk

This is amazingly easy to make and incredibly delicious.

- 1-1/2 cups water
- 7/8 cup dry unsweetened finely grated coconut

In medium-size kettle, heat water, but do not bring to boil. Place coconut in blender and add 1 cup of hot water. Blend for 2–3 minutes. Place colander in bowl and line colander with 4 thicknesses of cheesecloth. Pour blended coconut mixture into cheesecloth and twist to extract milk, letting milk go into bowl. Return coconut pulp to blender and add remaining 1/2 cup hot water. Blend for 1–2 minutes; strain and press through cheesecloth into bowl. Makes about 1 cup.

Per cup: 15.3g carbs, 10.5g fiber, 4g protein, 42g fat, 0mg cholesterol, 31mg sodium, 427 calories

5 Crispy Coconut Chicken Salad

- 2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1/4 cup unsweetened coconut flakes
- 1/4 cup ground almonds
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 tablespoons virgin coconut oil
- 4 cups mixed greens

Rinse chicken and pat dry. Cut chicken into strips and set aside. Mix coconut flakes and ground almonds together on dinner plate. In medium bowl, beat egg. Dip chicken strips in egg and roll each strip in coconut-flax mixture. Heat oil in pan and sauté chicken strips until completely opaque through center. Serve over bed of mixed greens with lemon-olive oil dressing or your favorite vinaigrette.

Per serving: 4g carbs, 2.6g fiber, 18g protein, 16g fat, 83mg cholesterol, 61mg sodium, 220 calories

From the book *The Coconut Diet: The Secret Ingredient that Helps You Lose Weight While You Eat Your Favorite Foods* by Cherie Calbom with John Calbom. Copyright©2005 by Cherie Calbom and John Calbom. Reprinted by permission of Warner Books, Inc, New York, NY. All rights reserved.

5 Coconut Ambrosia Dressing

Courtesy of www.livecoconutoil.com/recipes

- 1 pint plain yogurt
- 4 ounces cream cheese
- 1/8 teaspoon stevia, or more to taste
- 1–2 ounces Live Coconut Oil

Mix ingredients together with blender, then add flavor with berries, cut-up Granny Smith apples and cinnamon, a squeeze of lemon or lime, or your favorite flavoring extract (preferably without alcohol). You can also add your favorite nuts to this mix. A combination to try: vanilla, strawberries and blackberries. Makes 20 2-tablespoon servings.

Per serving (dressing only): 1.3g carbs, 0g fiber, 1g protein, 4g fat, 9mg cholesterol, 28mg sodium, 47 calories

The coconut oil gives this mixture a more exotic taste. Experiment with it.



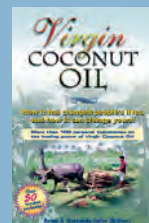
Want to know more? Take a look at these books:



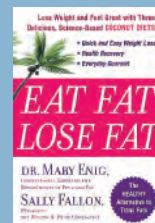
Coconut Cuisine by Jan London (JL Books, 2004; ISBN 0975895508)



The Coconut Diet by Cherie Calbom (Warner Books, 2005; ISBN 0446577162)



Virgin Coconut Oil by Brian and Marianita Jader Shilhavy (Tropical Traditions, Inc., 2004; ISBN 0976057808)



Eat Fat Lose Fat by Dr. Mary Enig and Sally Fallon (Hudson Street Press, 2004; ISBN 1594630054)