

An Unusual Culinary Column: Chia Seeds, The New Rage

By Karen Kain

You don't have to look far these days to come across a chia seed drink. They seem to be everywhere. What is it about those tiny seeds that when soaked overnight become a blown up gooey gel and why are those drinks so darn expensive?

First I am going to tell you why chia seeds are so good for you and then I am going to share some super simple and delicious ways to start adding them to your diet.

First of all chia seeds are a great addition to your diet because they have more omega 3 than salmon, more potassium than bananas, more calcium than milk, and are loaded with antioxidants. Chia seeds are rich in B vitamins, thiamine and niacin; they are also a great source of riboflavin and folate. Let's not forget, they are a nice source of minerals like calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus and zinc.

They are an excellent source of protein, which help to strengthen bones and are also energizing. Chia seed drinks can be a healthy alternative to those dangerous energy drinks. Chia seeds boost your energy level without the toxic ingredients and side effects.

Chia seeds also aid in weight loss because they are high in fiber and help to digest your food more regularly and they don't build up in your system impeding the liver and circulation. They help brain function because of the amount of fiber and iron, they also aid in purifying your blood, which helps with emotional stability. Chia seeds aid in weight loss because consuming them makes you feel full and

they are guilt free!

If you are not convinced to add chia seeds to your diet by the above, you might also appreciate that they help to



Directions:

Put the chia seeds into the warm water and stir to fully combine, seal and store in the refrigerator overnight. The recipe calls for equal parts of chia seeds to juice but you can make your own combination, 75% juice to 25% seeds is also delicious. Just stir and enjoy.

Hibiscus Chia Seed Drink

Ingredients:

- 1 Cup of warm water
- 3 Tablespoons chia seeds
- ½ Cup of hibiscus tea
- 1-2 Drops of stevia or a tablespoon of honey
- ¼ Cup of sparkling water

Directions:

Put the chia seeds into the warm water and stir to fully combine, seal and store in the refrigerator overnight. Add 1 cup of chia seeds mixture to ½-cup tea and ½ cup of sparkling water, stir and enjoy.

Sweet and Sour Chia Drink

Ingredients:

- ¼ Cup fresh lime or lemon juice
- 1/3 Cup agave nectar
- ¼ Cup chia seeds
- 10 Cups water

Directions:

Soak the chia seeds overnight sealed in 1 cup of water in the refrigerator. Add the remainder ingredients and enjoy.

Chia Seed Pudding

Ingredients:

- 6 Tablespoons chia seeds
- 2 Cups coconut or almond milk
- 1 Tablespoon flax seed
- The zest of one orange
- 3 Tablespoons maple syrup, or to taste

Directions:

Add the chia seeds and flax seed to the milk and stir to fully combine then let it chill in the refrigerator overnight. Add the zest and maple syrup to taste and serve alone or over your favorite fruit.

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lower your risk of heart disease, being high in omega-3, calcium and fiber, helping the heart and blood vessels function optimally. They are also low in calories and they have been found to help manage blood sugar levels due to their high fiber content. You might also be happy to know that they are inexpensive and have a long shelf life.

How can you start enjoying these healthy seeds? You can sprinkle them onto salads; add to smoothies, pancakes, muffins or oatmeal. Chia seeds are super easy to prepare, you just soak them over night and then you are ready to make chia drinks or chia pudding. You can use regular water or coconut water and for a creamier drink, use almond milk. I have tried many different combinations and I found that freshly juiced watermelon is my favorite. You can add the seeds making a 50/50 combination or 25% seeds and 75% juice. Please feel free to get creative and add to your favorite juice or tea or any other drink.

I hope that these recipes help you to stay cool and as always, I would love to hear what you are cooking.

Watermelon Chia Seed Drink

Ingredients:

- 1 Cup of warm water
- 3 Tablespoons chia seeds
- 1 Cup of watermelon juice
- 1 Sprig of mint

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