



Agave: The Tree of Life and Abundance

The agave (ah-gah-vay) plant is both beautiful and useful. The fleshy leaves of the agave plant cover the pineapple shaped heart, which contains a sweet, sticky juice called aguamiel. Traditionally, the agave plant is allowed to reach a certain age, then farmers dig the trunk out of the ground, split it open, and after removing the core, extract the precious sap, or aguamiel.

The Aztecs held the agave to be sacred, and agave juice played a prominent part in their religious ceremonies. Agave juice was also a favorite food of the Aztecs. Today the agave is considered by natives to be the Mexican Tree of Life and Abundance because of the aguamiel, honey-water, that flows from the leaves and roots when cut. The fermented juice from the agave plant forms the basis of the popular Mexican drink known as tequila.

Agave syrup—or nectar—is about 90 percent fructose. Yet only recently has it been adapted as a sweetener and a safe and delicious sugar substitute. Agave syrup has a low glycemic level, and unlike the crystalline form of fructose, which is refined mainly from corn (corn syrup), agave syrup is already fructose in its natural form. Therefore it does not need to be refined, and consequently it contains no processing chemicals. Moreover, because agave syrup is 25 percent sweeter than sugar, less of it is needed in your recipes or on your cereal, and one-third fewer calories are consumed. This can be a boon to people who are diabetic, have insulin resistance (Syndrome X), or are simply watching their carbohydrates.

Fructose, as we said, has a low glycemic value. But, according to recent research, if fructose is consumed with high glycemic foods, it loses its low glycemic value. In fact, it will take on the value of the higher glycemic food. Therefore, use fructose products such as agave syrup sparingly. It's a good policy to eat fructose-based desserts on an empty stomach, in between meals or in combination with other low-glycemic foods.

Our Naturel Agave Syrup is a Certified Organic, high fructose, low-glycemic sweetener naturally extracted from the trunk of the wild agave plant. Use it with confidence on your cereal, for baking, and whenever a recipe calls for sugar.

For baking, replace 1 cup of sugar with $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of Naturel. To replace liquids, reduce by $\frac{1}{3}$ cup. Reduce cooking temperature by 25 percent.

- Serving size: 1 tsp
- Calories: 20
- Total Carbohydrates: 5g (2 percent)
- Sugar: 5g

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