
The Chia Cheat Sheet by Angela Stokes

THE CHIA 'CHEAT SHEET'

by Angela Stokes

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What is Chia Seed?

Chia seed is an ancient superfood that is currently experiencing a glorious renaissance ;) It is a member of the sage family (*Salvia Hispanica*). The little black and white seeds were once a staple of the Incan, Mayan and Aztec cultures, along with the Native Americans of the southwest.

"Chia" is actually the Mayan word for strength. The seeds were used by these ancient cultures as mega-energy food, especially for their running messengers, who would carry a small pouch of it with them. Chia has been called 'Indian Running Food' and gives an incredibly 'sustaining' surge of energy. I've definitely noticed for myself the 'running energy' that chia seems to impart. If I eat chia, then run later that day, my endurance and ability to run further is greatly enhanced - pretty impressive stuff... ;)

The chia we sell in our online store is imported from Mexico and is certified organic. In Mexico they say that one tablespoon of chia seeds can sustain a person for 24 hours. Chia also happens to TASTE great, looks cute (like tiny dinosaur eggs) and is ready to eat really quickly - besides which it has an off-the-scale nutritional profile...

Why would you want to eat Chia?

Chia seeds are said to have:

- 2 times the protein of any other seed or grain,
- 5 times the calcium of milk, plus boron which is a trace mineral that helps transfer calcium into your bones,
- 2 times the amount of potassium as bananas,
- 3 times the reported antioxidant strength of blueberries
- 3 times more iron than spinach
- copious amounts of omega 3 and omega 6, which are essential fatty acids...

They are a complete source of protein, providing all the essential amino acids in an easily digestible form. They are also a fabulous source of soluble fibre.

Like flax, chia is highly 'hydrophilic' - the seeds absorb water and create a mucilaginous gel. They can hold 9-12 times their weight in water and they absorb it very rapidly - in under 10 minutes.

Antioxidants

One advantage of chia is that because it has such a high antioxidant content, the seeds stay stable for much longer, whereas flax, for example, may turn rancid. Chia seeds can easily be stored dry for 4-5 years without deterioration in flavour, odour or nutritional value. You can substitute chia in any recipe that calls for flax.

Mild Taste

The taste of chia is very mild and pleasant. That means you can easily combine it with other foods without changing the taste dramatically. People add chia to their sauces, bread batters, puddings, smoothies and more. The flavour is retained, plus masses more nutrition is added ;)

The 'Dieter's Dream Food'

Chia has been called a dieter's dream food because when added to foods, it bulks them up, displacing calories and fat without diluting the flavour. Thus, someone can eat a typical serving, yet only consume about half the calories they might have eaten, because the food has been bulked up with chia. PLUS, the eater gets a bellyful of nutrient-rich superfood goodness, which hydrates and sustains them - magic ;)

What are some other benefits of eating Chia?

- Provides energy
- Boosts strength
- Bolsters endurance
- Levels blood sugar
- Induces weight loss
- Aids intestinal regularity

Sugar Absorption

Chia slows the impact of sugars on the system, if eaten together. Chia gel creates a physical barrier between carbohydrates and the digestive enzymes that break them down, which slows the conversion of carbs into sugar. That means the energy from the food is released steadily, resulting in more endurance. This is clearly of great benefit to

diabetics in particular. It also means that I can combine chia with super-sweet tastes like apple juice and not get super-spiked ;)

Absorb and Retain Water

Due to the exceptional water-absorption quality of chia, it can help you prolong hydration and retain electrolytes, especially during exertion.

Easy to Digest

Whole, water-soaked chia seeds are easily digested and absorbed. Their tiny dinosaur-egg-like shells break down quickly. They feel light in the body, yet energising. Their nutrients can be quickly assimilated into the body.

Intestinal Broom

Chia seeds bulk up, then work like an incredible digestive broom, sweeping through your intestinal tract, helping to dislodge and eliminate old accumulated waste in the intestines. Many people find their stools also become more regular once they eat chia.

Inexpensive

Chia is a very reasonably priced, concentrated food. Our 1lb bags cost \$8. 1/3 cup of dry chia seeds (2 ounces) makes about 17 ounces of chia gel. This costs about \$1. Depending on how much gel you use, those 17oz will likely last, on average, about four days. That is about 25cents a day.

Versatile

Chia can be used in so many kinds of recipes - savoury, sweet - it works with anything. You might want to try them in salad dressings, cookie mixtures, smoothies, crackers, ice creams, juices and so on.

Gluten-Free

Chia seed protein contains no gluten. This makes it ideal for anyone with a gluten sensitivity or simply wanting to find a replacement for gluten-containing grains like wheat, barley, rye and oats.

Which medical conditions can Chia help relieve or support?

Chia is reported to be beneficial for a vast range of issues, for example:

- weight loss/balance
- thyroid conditions
- hypo-glycaemia
- diabetes
- IBS
- celiac disease
- acid reflux
- lowering cholesterol

Ancient Remedy

In the traditional cultures that consumed chia, like the Aztecs, chia was also regarded as a medicine. It was used in myriad ways - from cleaning the eyes to helping heal wounds, topically, to relieving joint pain and so on. It was considered extremely valuable for healing.

Acid Reflux

One woman we know uses chia therapeutically to manage her acid reflux. Because of the highly absorbent properties of chia, she can swallow a Tbsp of dry seeds with just a little water and they go into her stomach and absorb the excess acid. She makes sure to drink a glass of water a few minutes later, as the seeds are so hydrophilic that if they do not find enough to absorb in the stomach, they will draw from the tissues instead. By allowing the seeds to first absorb the acid, then drinking some more water, our friend is able to very simply, effectively and cheaply handle her condition. :)

Regeneration

Chia aids rapid development of tissue, due to its incredible nutrient profile and easy assimilation. It can be very beneficial for those healing from injuries, people like bodybuilders who are always re-forming tissues and women who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

How do you use Chia?

The most common way to eat chia is to first soak the seeds. They can very rapidly absorb a large amount of liquid - between 9-12 times their volume, in under 10 minutes.

The Basic Gel

To make a basic chia gel, simply add 1/3 cup of seeds (2oz) to 2 cups of water. Stir the mixture well, to avoid clumping, then leave it in your fridge, in a sealed jar. This will yield around 17oz of chia gel. You can begin to eat the gel almost immediately if you like. Just 10 minutes is enough time for the gel to be formed. More of the nutrients will be easily accessible after a few hours however, so many people like to make up a batch like this and leave it in the fridge. It will stay good for about three weeks. Then you can just reach into the fridge and take out some of the ready-made gel

whenever you need it. You might add it to smoothies, mix it with salad dressings, puddings or granola, or simply take it by the spoonful.

Beyond Water...

As mentioned above, chia will absorb anything - it doesn't have to soak in water. We like soaking it in things like apple juice for example. That way, the intense sweetness of the apple juice is also offset by the chia and it tastes yummy ;). We also often blend fruits - for example bananas and persimmons, then stir the chia into that mixture. Again, the longer the seeds are left to soak, the more their nutrients will be readily available to you, yet you could easily eat a meal like this 10 minutes or less after preparing it.

Whole Seeds

You can also sprinkle the dry seeds onto salads or add them to granola mixes. You may also want to experiment with grinding them first in a coffee grinder, to make a 'chia flour' you can then add to smoothies, soups and so on.

Ten Raw Chia Recipes

WARNING - these are 'hardcore' raw foodist recipes, developed and used by long-term raw food eaters. Some may seem quite peculiar or unfamiliar to those who are not accustomed to eating raw. We encourage you to try them out though and to perhaps use them as a 'spring-board' for creating and enjoying your own chia recipes...

All of these recipes are based on one person eating.

Basic Chia Gel

Chia

Water

Mix 1/3-cup chia seeds to 2 cups water. Stir. This is the 'basic gel' recipe that can be stored in your fridge and used as required.

Sweet Shortbread Chia

4-5 tbsps chia seeds

2 cups fresh apple juice

2 tbsp lucuma powder

1/2 cup dried mulberries

1/4 cup pumpkin seeds

Soak the chia seeds in the apple juice. Stir in the remaining ingredients. Leave to soak for at least 10 minutes before consuming.

'Chia Fresca'

2 tsp chia seeds

10oz pure water

juice of one lemon or lime

agave syrup or raw honey to taste

This is still a popular drink in modern-day Mexico. Simply stir the ingredients together and enjoy.

Fruity Chia

3 small or 2 big apples

8 dates, pits removed

4-5 tbsp chia seeds

1/4 cup dried mulberries

Blend the apples and six of the dates together. Transfer that mixture into a bowl and stir in the chia seeds and mulberries. Chop down the remaining 2 dates into pieces and stir those in too. Leave to soak for at least 10 minutes before consuming.

Bana-paya Chia

1 banana

1 cup papaya flesh

6 dried Turkish figs

4-5 tbsp chia, ground

Blend the banana and papaya flesh together. Put the figs in this mixture and leave it to soak overnight. Blend the whole mixture, including the figs, the next day. Stir in the ground chia seed. Serve.

Chia Gel 'Muesli'

- 1 cup of basic chia gel
- 2 bananas, mashed with a fork
- 1 tbsp lucuma powder
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 1/4 cup pumpkin seeds

Mix together the ingredients in a bowl with a fork and eat.

Green Chia

- 8 dried prunes, soaked in 1 pint pure water
- 1 tbsp spirulina powder
- 1/3-cup chia seeds

Drain off most of the prune soak water and put the chia seeds to soak in the prune soak water. Blend together the prunes with the spirulina and a small amount of the soak water. Stir the spirulina/prune mixture into the soaked chia seeds. Leave the chia to soak for at least 10 minutes before consuming.

Persi-nana Chia

- 4-5 tbsp chia seeds
- 1-2 bananas
- 1-2 persimmons
- 1tsp maca
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- handful of goji berries
- handful of pumpkin seeds

Blend together the bananas and persimmons. Pour out the mixture into a bowl. Stir in the chia seeds, maca, cinnamon, gojis and pumpkin seeds. Leave the chia to soak for at least 10 minutes before consuming.

Raw 'Rice Pudding'

4-5 tbsp chia seed

2 cups almond milk

raw honey or agave syrup to taste

Combine the ingredients to your taste. Leave the chia to soak for at least 10 minutes before consuming. You can also add other flavours like vanilla, cinnamon or cardamom.

Banana-nut Bread

2 cups vegetable juice pulp (preferably at least half carrot)

8 tbsp ground chia

1/4 cup chopped walnuts

1/2 cup raisins

5 bananas

Mix together the veggie juice pulp and bananas in a food processor. Add in the ground chia and let the food processor run until the seeds are completely mixed in.

Transfer the mixture to a bowl with the walnuts and raisins and mix them in thoroughly by hand. Shape into a loaf. For major yumminess, top with ?Cream Cheese? (see below).

Cream Cheese

Flesh of three avocados

9 dates

juice of 1 or 2 lemons

big handful of dulse seaweed

Blend.

Organic chia seeds can be purchased from the
RawReform Online Store [HERE](#).

We sell them in 1lb, 5lb, 25lb and 55lb bags.

We also stock many of the other foods mentioned here, such as dried mulberries, dulse seaweed, lucuma powder, agave syrup, raw honey, goji berries, spirulina and maca.
Our range further includes juicers, blenders and dehydrators, to make your raw chia recipes, PLUS the fabulous book 'The Magic of Chia' by James Scheer, in which you can learn MUCH more about this 'ancient wonder food'...

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