

Taste Test: Coconut



Coconuts are such a cool fruit! They contain a textured brown exterior and a smooth white flesh in the interior. The white part of the coconut is referred to as the kernel and has a subtle, sweet flavour. The kernel can be eaten raw or in dried form and has been utilized in many other processed food applications such as coconut milk, oil, water, and coconut flour. Coconuts also contain high amounts of saturated fat, manganese, copper, iron, and selenium.¹

Food Fact

Although the word “nut” is in “coconut”, they are not nuts at all. They are referred to as “drupes”!

How to Choose:

- Coconuts can be found in your local grocery store, some have the brown, textured exterior and some are green on the exterior.
- These two varieties are the same, however the brown coconuts are fully mature and often contain less juice, whereas the green coconuts are not completely ripe and usually contain less flesh.
- To choose a coconut, pick one up, it should feel relatively heavy, shake it, and listen for liquid inside. Avoid choosing one with cracks, so be careful to inspect before purchasing!²

How to Prepare:

- To open the coconut, try poking a skewer through the soft part of the bottom of the shell to create a ½ inch hole. Drain the coconut water into a dish, usually you can obtain around ¾ cup, the juice should smell fresh and have a subtle, sweet taste.
- Next, use a hammer to gently tap the shell with a hammer, turn as needed until the shell starts to crack in half. Once the coconut is opened, gently loosen the flesh from the exterior with a butter knife. If there is brown on the flesh, use a vegetable peeler to remove, and voila!²

How to Store:

- A raw, whole coconut can be stored at room temperature for up to 4 months, if the meat of the coconut is removed in the shell, it can be refrigerated for up to a week or frozen for 3 months.

Note:

Canada's food guide recommends:

- Trying a variety of fruits and vegetables, this includes opting for different textures, colours and shapes!³

I Tried It!

My Rating (circle one):



Would you like to try coconut again?

YES NO

Ideas for Serving Coconut:

- Try a glass of refreshing unsweetened coconut water with ice
- Try adding toasted coconut flakes into your baking
- Make a trail mix using coconut flakes
- Use shredded coconut to make protein balls
- Crust your favourite fish in fine coconut flakes

No-Bake Coconut & Banana Lentil Energy Bites

Makes 25-30 Bites

Ingredients:

- 1 cup coconut flakes, unsweetened
- 1/4 cup sunflower seeds, unroasted, unsalted
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 cup mashed, ripe banana, approx. 1 whole banana
- 1/2 cup cooked green lentils
- 3 tbsp honey
- 1/4 cup mini chocolate chips, or chopped chocolate
- 1 tbsp coconut oil, melted (not hot)
- 1/2 cup coconut flour or almond flour

Directions:

1. In a food processor, add coconut flakes, sunflower seeds, cinnamon, banana, lentils, and honey. Pulse until smooth, scrape down the sides and pulse again until well mixed. Transfer to a bowl using a spatula.
2. Stir in the chocolate chunks or chips until well mixed. Stir in the coconut or almond flour until fully combined.
3. Roll into bite-sized balls. About 1 tbsp in size. Cover in an airtight container and refrigerate for a quick and easy snack during the week. Alternatively, you can freeze them until ready to use!



Recipe adapted from [Cookspiration](#).

Getting children involved in cooking at home makes them more likely to eat more protein and select healthy foods. For more information, please contact APPLE Schools at info@appleschool.ca.

1. Health Line. 5 Impressive Benefits of Coconut. <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/coconut-nutrition>. Accessed April 2022.

2. Very Well Fit. Coconut Nutrition Facts and Health Benefits. <https://www.verywellfit.com/coconut-nutrition-facts-4135199>. Accessed May 2022.

3. Government of Canada. Canadas Food Guide. <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>. Accessed April 2022.