

# CHIA SEEDS

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This OR this?



Chia seeds? You mean those “ch ch ch chia” seeds you rub on those clay pets and watch them sprout? You can eat those? Are you sure? If you have found yourself asking similar questions, you will want to read this article for all your sought after answers!

Chia seeds have found their way into the media and health food stores as being the “new superfood”. Dr. Oz, news stations, books and magazines have all been raving about these seeds and their potential health benefits. To help you, I have reviewed and summarized all the reliable sources of information to give you the truth about chia seeds.

## What exactly are Chia Seeds?

Chia seed (*Salvia hispanica* L.) is a whole grain with a long history of use by humans. This plant is native to Mexico and Guatemala and has been used for food, oil and medicines as long ago as pre-Columbian times. With respect to culinary uses, whole seeds, seed flour and seed oil can all be used to make a variety of dishes. Chia seeds can be white or black (take caution to red, brown or small black seeds as these do not hold the same nutritional value).

## Why are chia seeds so healthy?

Nutritionally, chia seeds have a similar nutrient composition as flaxseeds but with a much milder taste and you don’t have to grind them to get the health benefits. Chia seeds are known for their very high content of omega-3 fatty acids (mostly alpha-linolenic acid-ALA). They are also an excellent source soluble fibre, calcium, vegetable protein, iron and magnesium!

The nutritional composition of chia seeds varies depending on growing location, conditions and genotype. Salba<sup>®</sup> is a brand name for the only two registered white varieties of the chia grain.

Traditionally chai is mostly black in colour however the Salba varieties are developed with selective breeding techniques and claimed to have more of a standardized nutrient profile.

Given the varying nutrient composition of other types of chia seeds, it is recommended to consume the Salba chia seeds to ensure you are getting the claimed nutrients offered.

Salba chia seeds contain the following nutrients per serving (15g or 15ml or 1 tbsp):

### **Omega-3s**

- A serving of Salba chia is packed with 3,425mg of Omega-3 (ALA). This essential fatty acid is used by the body to form cell walls and contributes to improved circulation and cell function.

### **Fiber**

- Salba chia contains 5.1g of dietary fiber per serving. Fiber supports healthy digestion and increases satiety, helping to ward off cravings and sugar crashes.

### **Calcium**

- Each serving of Salba chia has 115.5mg of calcium, an essential mineral important for bone health.

### **Iron**

- Salba chia contains 1.25mg of iron per serving. Iron is integral to health used to build muscle and ensure oxygenation to cells, an important element to maintaining energy.

### **Magnesium**

- Salba chia has 57mg of magnesium, needed to maintain muscle and nerve function and immune support.

### **Other Nutrients**

- Salba chia also contains naturally occurring Vitamin A, Biotin, Niacin, Protein, Copper, Riboflavin, Folate, Vitamin C, Thiamine, Molybdenum, Zinc and Pantothenate.

## **Are the stated benefits proven with research?**

Because of its high fibre, ALA and vitamin and mineral content, chia has been evaluated for its potential to improve glycemic control, aid in weight loss and reduce cardiovascular risk factors in humans. There has been minimal research to prove the above health affects however, one study indicated that there may be a benefit in the lowering of systolic blood pressure with addition of 40g/day of chia seed to the diet.

## How can I add chia to my diet?

- Sprinkle on cold or hot cereal in the morning
- Make smoothies and beverages with chia gel (chia seeds soaked in water for 30 minutes makes a gel that you can add to smoothies)
- Soak the seeds in a flavoured milk like almond milk and spice up with cinnamon and raisins to make a great porridge
- Mix into your yogurt
- Add to hot dishes such as rice, stews, casseroles
- Mix into baked goods such as cookies, loafs, breads and granola bars
- Toast seeds and sprinkle on salads

\*For more recipe Ideas go to [www.salbasmart.com](http://www.salbasmart.com)