

Coconuts are one of the most nutritious of all fruits, but unfortunately in the United States they are also one of the most overlooked. Coconuts are not a traditional part of the American diet, but have been a staple food to many populations, such as island and Asian cultures, for centuries.

## Coconuts: Young versus Mature

There are several different ways to enjoy fresh coconuts, which can be young or mature. Young coconuts have either a green shell or a white ‘husk’; if the outer shell has been removed while mature coconuts are the more familiar-looking brown, hairy variety. The nutrients and physical characteristics change as a coconut matures. Young coconuts have more ‘water’ and soft, gel-like meat, and mature coconuts have firm meat and less ‘water.’ The nutrient values per 100-gram (edible) portion vary significantly as you can see in the chart below.

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Serving Size 1 cup, shredded (80g)	
<b>Amount Per Serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b> 283	Calories from Fat 224
<b>% Daily Value*</b>	
<b>Total Fat</b> 27g	41%
Saturated Fat 24g	119%
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	0%
<b>Sodium</b> 16mg	1%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 12g	4%
Dietary Fiber 7g	29%
Sugars 5g	
<b>Protein</b> 3g	
Vitamin A	0%
Vitamin C	4%
Calcium	1%
Iron	11%

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

NutritionData.com

Source: Secretariat of the Pacific Community

### Coconut Milk, Juice and Oil: What's the Difference?

Most people think that coconut milk is the liquid inside the coconut, but this is not the case. The liquid inside the coconut is known as coconut water or juice, and coconut cream is made from pressing the coconut meat. Coconut milk is made from the expressed juice of grated coconut meat and water

Coconut oil, on the other hand, is the fatty oil that comes from the coconut meat. It's important to note that coconut oils on the market vary dramatically in terms of quality. Low-quality coconut oils, which should be avoided, are processed by chemical extraction, using solvent extracts, which produces higher yields and is quicker and less expensive. However, the oils contain chemical residues and many are also hydrogenated, bleached and deodorized.

High-quality coconut oil is a completely different product and is truly the healthiest oil you can consume. It is a much safer alternative to other popular oils such as canola oil, where most of its omega-3s are transformed into trans-fats during the deodorization process, which increases the dangers of chronic diseases.

Because of these drastic variations, my team and I here researched coconut oil extensively until we found the ideal source. I now highly recommend and offer you what is clearly the premier brand of virgin coconut oil in the United States, Tropical Traditions. This virgin coconut oil is not only certified organic, but it also met all our other requirements, including no GMO ingredients, bleaching, deodorizing, refining or hydrogenation. Tropical Traditions also uses fresh coconuts (not "copra" or dried coconuts like most oils) that come from a rural region of the Philippines untainted by urban pollution.

If you do choose another brand of coconut oil, please be sure that it meets these requirements. [Fresh coconut!](#)

### Which Type of Coconut is Best?

Coconut can be safely added to most everyone's diet, but to determine which type of coconut is best for you you'll need to determine your metabolic type. Young coconuts are good for most people, but are particularly good for carb and mixed types. Mature coconuts, on the other hand, are best for protein types.

Similarly, protein types will likely enjoy the firm meat and coconut cream from the mature coconut, while carb and mixed types will tend to naturally prefer the juice.

### Health Benefits

Coconuts can add flavor, variety and--best of all--healthy nutrients to your diet. Coconuts are rich in lauric acid, which is known for being antiviral, antibacterial and antifungal, and boosts the immune system.

## Coconut Nutrition

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Fresh coconut juice is one of the highest sources of electrolytes known to man, and can be used to prevent dehydration, for instance in cases of diarrhea or strenuous exercise, instead of a sports drink. Some remote areas of the world even use coconut juice intravenously, short-term, to help hydrate critically ill patients and in emergency situations.

Other health benefits of coconuts and coconut oil include:

Help you lose weight, or maintain your already good weight

Reduce the risk of heart disease

Lower your cholesterol

Improve conditions in those with diabetes and chronic fatigue

Improve Crohn's, IBS, and other digestive disorders

Prevent other disease and routine illness with its powerful antibacterial, antiviral and antifungal agents

Increase metabolism and promotes healthy thyroid function

Boost your daily energy

Rejuvenate your skin and prevent wrinkles

Unfortunately, most U.S. supermarkets do not carry fresh coconuts. However, they are widely available in ethnic grocery stores, such as Asian or Latino markets, farmers' markets and health food stores. If you are unable to locate a source near you, try requesting them at your local health food store, as many will carry them upon request.

The first part of March I visited Jamaica for one week and was absolutely delighted to find that you can actually purchase young green coconut water in the store in bottles just like one purchases bottled water. I am actually in the process right now of determining if we can import this into the United States for sale here as it would be an absolutely stunning health food, especially if one ferments it into kefir water. I will be writing some articles about this amazing probiotic, fermented food in the near future.

And once you've brought your coconut home you can read my article on raw coconuts that was posted last year for more information--such as how to get it open!

By Dr. Joseph Mercola  
with Rachael Drooege

Ref [nutritiondata.com](http://nutritiondata.com)