



Alternative Sweetener Swaps



Looking to reduce added sugars in your diet for blood sugar management, weight control or a healthier lifestyle? Seeking **alternative sweeteners** to granulated white sugar that provide a sugary taste, but wonder how?

Spoiler alert! You may just be swapping one sweetener for another and not saving sugar calories. Or, you may be adding more calories, processing and refining. Allergic reactions or gastrointestinal issues may occur. And ... you may not like the appearance, taste or texture of products or recipes with alternative sweetener swaps.

Still, for your sweet tooth and discerning pleasures, I present these more popular alternative sweeteners to granulated white sugar—with my two cents' worth.

Note: When syrups are substituted, you may need to reduce other liquids in recipes and/or adjust the baking or cooking time.

SWAPS...

Agave Nectar/Syrup (Light, Amber and Dark)

- **Source:** Blue agave plant
- **Uses:** Cocktails (with mescal or tequila), coffee and tea; light agave in dressings, fruity desserts and sauces, or amber in pancakes, pumpkin pie and waffles

- **Swap:** *About ¾ cup agave nectar for 1 cup granulated white sugar*

Allulose

- **Sources:** Naturally occurring “rare sugar” in **figs**, jackfruit, raisins and wheat
- **Uses:** Baked goods, beverages, frostings, frozen desserts and yogurt
- **Swap:** *About 1 cup granulated allulose for 1 cup granulated white sugar*

Barley Syrup/Malt

- **Source:** Fermented and sprouted barley
- **Uses:** Baked beans, barbeque sauce, caramel corn, dark breads, gingerbread, home brewing, muffins, pancakes, popcorn balls, spice cakes and waffles
- **Swap:** *About 1 ½ cups barley malt syrup for 1 cup granulated white sugar*

Brown Rice Syrup/Malt

- **Source:** Cooked, fermented and strained brown rice
- **Uses:** Cakes, candies, cocktails, coffee and tea, cookies, dressings, glazes, granola, marshmallows, pancakes, sauces and waffles
- **Swap:** *About 1 ⅓ cups brown rice syrup for 1 cup granulated white sugar*

Brown Sugar (Cane Sugar-Brown)

- **Source:** Refined white cane sugar with added molasses
- **Uses:** Bacon, cookies, barbeque sauce, butterscotch, chili, gingerbread, ham, marinades, sauces and sweet potatoes
- **Swap:** *About 1 cup brown sugar for 1 cup granulated white sugar*

Coconut Nectar/Sugar

- **Source:** Sap of coconut palm tree
- **Uses:** Candies, caramels, coffees and teas, granolas, juices, ice creams, pancakes, quick breads, smoothies, soft-baked cookies, spreads and waffles
- **Swap:** *About 1 cup coconut nectar or sugar for 1 cup other liquid sweeteners or granulated sugars*

Date Syrup/Sugar

- **Source:** Dehydrated ground dates from date palm
- **Uses:** Carrot cakes, crisps, crumbles, dressings, spice cakes and toppings
- **Swap:** *About 1 cup date sugar for 1 cup granulated white sugar. About ⅔ cup date syrup for 1 cup granulated white sugar*

Fruit Juice Concentrates

- **Sources:** Concentrated fruit juices as apple, grape or orange
- **Uses:** **Baked goods** (except white cakes and chocolate recipes), hot breakfast cereals, lemonade and plain yogurt
- **Swap:** *About ¾ cup fruit juice concentrate for 1 cup granulated white sugar*

Fruit Purees

- **Sources:** Applesauce, bananas or prunes
- **Uses:** Breads, cakes, cookies, ice cream, icings, mousses and muffins
- **Swap:** *About 1 cup fruit puree for 1 cup granulated white sugar, but reduce other liquids. Some fruit purees may also be used as fat replacers.*

Honey

- **Sources:** Bee pollen or flower nectar
- **Uses:** Beverages as coffee and tea, chocolates, cakes, condiments, cookies, frostings, ice cream, salad dressings, sauces and toppings
- **Swap:** *About $\frac{3}{4}$ cup honey for 1 cup of granulated white sugar, but reduce other liquids*

Maple Syrup (Light, Medium Amber and Dark Amber)

- **Source:** Xylem sap of sugar maple trees
- **Uses:** Baked beans, brownies, cakes, cookies, fruit compote, granola, muffins, pancakes, pies, puddings, salad dressings and waffles
- **Swap:** *About $\frac{3}{4}$ cup pure maple syrup for 1 cup granulated white sugar, but reduce other liquids*

Molasses (Blackstrap, Light, Dark (Medium), Treacle and Sorghum (technically not molasses))

- **Source:** Residue after sugar beet or sugar cane juice boiled and extracted
- **Uses:** Baked beans, barbecue sauce, brown sugar, cakes, caramel corn, gingerbread, glazes, granola, spice cookies and pumpernickel and rye breads
- **Swap:** *About 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups molasses plus $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon baking soda for 1 cup granulated white sugar; reduce liquid by about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup*

Monk Fruit Sweetener

- **Source:** Extract of Southeast Asia plant called luo han guo
- **Uses:** Coffee or tea, dessert toppings, frosting, oatmeal, sauces, smoothies and yogurt
- **Swap:** *About 1 cup monk fruit sweetener for 1 cup granulated white sugar*

Natural Cane Sugar (Turbinado or “Raw” Sugar)

- **Source:** Sugarcane processed into cane juice, evaporated and boiled
- **Uses:** Cookies, crumbles, crisps, crunchy toppings, fruit desserts, muffins, quick breads and spice rubs
- **Swap:** *About 1 cup natural cane sugar for 1 cup granulated white sugar, with tan color and molasses flavor*

Rapadura (Barbados Sugar)

- **Source:** Dehydrated cane juice
- **Uses:** Chocolate, coffee or tea, candies, dressings, glazes, marinades and sauces
- **Swap:** *About 1 cup rapadura for 1 cup granulated white sugar*

Sorghum Syrup

- **Source:** African grass now grown in America
- **Uses:** Baked beans, barbeque sauce, hot cereals, pancake and waffle topping
- **Swap:** *About 1/3 more sorghum than amount of granulated white sugar*

Stevia Liquid/Powder

- **Source:** Native South American plant
- **Uses:** Batters, beverages, oatmeal and yogurt
- **Swap:** *About 1/2 teaspoon stevia liquid or 3 teaspoons stevia powder for 1/4 cup granulated white sugar*

Sucanat (Similar to Rapadura)

- **Source:** Dehydrated cane juice with molasses
- **Uses:** Baked goods, beverages, cakes, cobblers and pies
- **Swap:** *About 1 cup sucanat for 1 cup granulated white sugar*

Sugar Alcohols (Erythritol, Sorbitol or Xylitol)

- **Sources:** Birch wood or cornstarch
- **Uses:** Lower-calorie and sugar-free cakes, candies, cookies, energy bars, fondants, frostings, ice creams, jams and puddings
- **Swap:** *Equivalents to granulated white sugar vary*

Yacon Syrup

- **Source:** South American yacon root
- **Uses:** Oatmeal, pancakes, smoothies, sweet sauces, waffles and yogurt
- **Swap:** *About 2/3 cup yacon syrup for 1 cup granulated white sugar*

Though I didn't detail demerara or muscovado sugar (brown sugars), evaporated cane juice, jaggery (cake or cone), SugaVida™ (Palmyra Blossom Nectar) or tapioca syrup, each presents unique features, size and texture of crystals, moisture and molasses or toffee flavors.

In general, "brown" or "natural" may not indicate better or best. Neither may "zero calorie" or "no carbs". Some alternative sweeteners have such intense sweetening power they beg for less. Others may have aftertaste or side effects. Ultimately taste and tolerance "take the cake".

Easy does it!

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