



The intent of this guide is purely informational. The summaries included represent the highlights of each sweetener and are not meant to be comprehensive. The traffic light system is not a dietary recommendation but a buying guideline. Sugar, in any form (even honey, maple syrup and dried fruit), can suppress the immune system and throw our bodies out of balance. It is important to consume sugar smartly. Start by choosing the best sweeteners for you. Then keep in mind that sugar is best reduced or avoided when your immune system is compromised e.g. - if you have candida overgrowth, are chronically stressed, fatigued or in pain, are diabetic or pre-diabetic, have digestive issues (IBS, Crohn's etc.), etc... For more detailed information on how sweeteners can affect your body speak to one of our expert nutritionists on staff!

The Big Carrot is committed to organic agriculture and as such prioritizes the organic version of all of these products. The organic logo is used below to represent those items that must be organic to be included, without review, on our shelves and in our products.

Sweetener (alphabetical)	Definition	Nutrition
<p>Agave</p> 	<p>Agave is a liquid sweetener that has a texture and appearance similar to honey. Agave syrup comes from the blue agave plant, the same plant that produces tequila, which grows primarily in Mexico. The core of the plant contains agave nectar, the sweet substance used to produce agave syrup. While organic manufacturers use low heat and no chemicals, most conventional methods involve enzymes, chemicals and heat to convert agave nectar into agave syrup.</p> <p>Some conventional brands can be cut with GMO corn syrup Over production of agave jeopardizes bat habitats</p>	<p>Agave contains some fiber and has a low glycemic index compared to other sweeteners. It is very high in the monosaccharide fructose, which relies heavily on the liver for metabolism.</p>
<p>Birch syrup</p>	<p>Birch syrup is a distinctive savory, mineral tasting syrup made from the sap of birch trees. The sap is reduced in the same way as maple syrup using reverse osmosis machines and evaporators in commercial production. Different types of birch will produce slightly different flavour profiles.</p>	<p>Birch syrup's predominant, naturally occurring sugar is fructose (42–54%), as opposed to maple syrup, which contains primarily sucrose. Birch syrup is high in vitamins and minerals, including vitamin C, potassium, manganese, thiamin, and calcium.</p>
<p>Coconut Sugar Coconut Nectar</p>	<p>Coconut Sugar is made from the nectar of the coconut palm flower (coco nucifera) and not the flesh of the coconut. Coconut sugar has been used as a traditional sweetener for thousands of years in the South and South-East Asian regions where the coconut palm is abundant. The nutrient rich juice is evaporated into nectar or dried into powder. The nectar is similar in texture to maple syrup and the coconut sugar is similar in texture and appearance to brown sugar.</p>	<p>Coconut sweeteners have a relatively low glycemic index and contain a variety of vitamins, minerals and amino acids. They are especially high in potassium, but also contain moderate amounts of phosphorus, calcium, magnesium, sodium, and trace amounts of boron, zinc, manganese, iron and copper.</p>
<p>Cane Sugar (aka Sugar)</p> 	<p>Native to warm, tropical regions, sugar cane is a grass with stout, jointed, fibrous stalks that is rich in sugars. The cane is crushed, producing cane juice, which is clarified and concentrated through heating and evaporation to produce a powdered sweetener. Organic cane sugar is grown in accordance with Organic Regulations e.g.- no herbicides, pesticides are used in the cultivation, cane is green cut, natural lime is used in the clarifying process, and bone char is prohibited as a decolourant, no chemical bleaching or decolourising.</p> <p>Conventional "sugar" is frequently made from GMO beet sugar</p>	<p>Cane sugar is primarily comprised of the monosaccharide sucrose. It contains no nutrients other than simple carbohydrates. What begins as 14% sucrose in the sugar cane stalk is processed to 99% - 100% sucrose. Sucrose (sugar) is a disaccharide made up of 50% glucose and 50% fructose and is broken down rapidly into its constituent parts.</p>
<p>Cane Sugar-Brown (aka Brown Sugar)</p> 	<p>Brown sugar, not to be confused with naturally unrefined brown-coloured sugars, is white sugar (sucrose) with some of the molasses added back in after processing. Brown sugar contains from 3.5% molasses (light brown sugar) to 6.5% molasses (dark brown sugar). Brown sugar has a wet, sandy texture — though less sticky than muscovado sugar.</p> <p>Conventional "sugar" is frequently made from GMO beet sugar</p>	<p>See cane sugar</p>
<p>Evaporated Cane Juice - aka Dehydrated Cane Juice Granulated Sugar Cane Juice Unrefined Cane Juice</p>	<p>ECJ is produced from milled sugar cane through a single-crystallization process. These unrefined brown sugars will contain 85% to 98% sucrose, compared to 99% sucrose for regular granulated (white) sugar. Evaporated Cane Juice is not liquid, but crystal form. It is tan in color and has a slight molasses flavor. This minimally processed, full-flavored sweetener does not go through the final stages of purification, blending, colouring or whitening.</p>	<p>Contains trace amounts of vitamins and minerals, but is not considered a significant source of any nutrients.</p>
<p>Sucanat</p>	<p>Sucanat is unrefined cane sugar that has not had the molasses removed from it. As such, it has a strong molasses flavour.</p>	
<p>Demerara Sugar</p>	<p>Demerara Sugar is a specialty raw sugar that takes its name from the Demerara colony in Guyana. This is a type of cane sugar with a fairly large crystal and a pale amber colour.</p>	<p>Contains a larger content of molasses compared to regular cane sugar. Contains trace amounts of vitamins and minerals, but is not considered a significant source of any nutrients.</p>
<p>Muscovado Sugar</p>	<p>Muscovado Sugar is a specialty raw sugar; moist with high molasses content.</p>	
<p>Rapadura Sugar (aka Barbados Sugar)</p>	<p>Rapadura is specialty raw sugar largely produced at sugar cane plantations in tropical regi.</p>	<p>Agave contains some fiber and has a low glycemic index compared to other sweeteners. It is very high in the monosaccharide fructose, which relies heavily on the liver for metabolism.</p>
<p>Turbinado Sugar (aka Sugar in The Raw™)</p>	<p>Turbinado Sugar is a specialty raw sugar similar to but more refined than Demerara. The name comes from being spun out in a turbine or cylinder while being washed. Sugar in The Raw is a trade-marked brand of Turbinado.</p>	<p>Contains a larger content of molasses compared to regular cane sugar. Contains trace amounts of vitamins and minerals, but is not considered a significant source of any nutrients.</p>



Sweetener (alphabetical)	Definition	Nutrition
Date sugar	Date sugar is made from the fruit of the palm date tree. The dried dates are pulverized into a powder.	AWhole food, minimal processing, high in fiber, vitamins and minerals such as B6, potassium and magnesium.
Fruit	Fruit is the sweet and fleshy product of a tree or other plant that contains seed and can be eaten as food. Raw fruit, dry fruits and fruit sauces can all be used to add sweetness to a product. Banana, mango, applesauce and berries are particularly effective additions.	Whole food, rich in vitamins and fiber. Some fresh fruits, such as pineapple and papaya, contain beneficial enzymes.
Fruit Juice Concentrate	Fruit Juice Concentrates are made by removing the water content from fruit juice to intensify its sweetness. Fruit Juice Concentrate is a combination of simple sugars, fructose, glucose, and sucrose typically derived from grapes, apples, peaches, pears or pineapples.	Maintains some of its nutrients from processing yet has a high concentration of sugars.
Grain Malts / Syrups including: Oat syrup /malt Brown Rice Syrup /malt Barley Syrup /malt Corn Malt Syrup	Grain malts or syrups are unrefined sweeteners produced by adding a small amount of the sprouted grain to cooked grain. This process activates the enzymes that are required to modify the grain's starches into sugars. Malts are then strained and cooked, becoming a golden syrup with a butterscotch flavour. Organic malt ensure the enzymes and corn are non-GMO	Grain syrups tend to be less sweet than table sugar. Contains trace amounts of vitamins and minerals, but is not considered a significant source of any nutrients. Because malted syrup is primarily complex sugars, it is relatively slow to digest and does not result in rapid fluctuation in blood sugar.
Honey-Pasteurized	Honey is the substance made when the nectar from plants are gathered and stored in the honeycomb by honeybees. Each bee will make, on average, about half a teaspoon of honey in its lifetime. The honeybee (Apis Mellifera) collects nectar from flowers in its mouth. Enzymes in the bee's saliva cause a chemical reaction that turns the nectar into honey, which is deposited into the walls of the hive. The texture and flavour of the honey depends on the forage of the honeybees. Not considered vegan. Organic honey ensures that the forage crops were non-GMO.	Heating honey (pasteurization) destroys and/or inhibits many of the naturally occurring healthful compounds, such as enzymes and nutrients.
Honey-Raw	Raw (unpasteurized) honey has not been heated or filtered. Not considered vegan. Organic honey ensures that the forage crops were non-GMO.	Honey gets its sweetness from the monosaccharides fructose and glucose. Raw honey is a natural source of minerals such as calcium, iron and potassium as well as several B vitamins. Note: raw honey sometimes contains dormant endospores of the bacterium Clostridium botulinum, which can be dangerous to infants, so it should be avoided by children younger than 12 months old and breastfeeding mothers
Jaggery	Jaggery is a dark unrefined sugar used primarily in India and Africa. This traditional non-centrifugal sugar is commonly manufactured from sugar cane, date palms or the sap of coconut and sago palms. It is a concentrated product without separation of the molasses and crystals, and can vary from golden brown to dark brown in colour. It is produced by boiling raw sugar cane or palm juice in iron pans. It is then formed into blocks.	Jaggery is minimally processed and as a result retains some minerals and salts. The darker the jaggery is in color, the richer it is in mineral content (particularly iron content).
Lucuma Powder	Lucuma Powder is made from whole Peruvian lucuma fruit that has been dried at low temperatures and milled into a fine powder.	Lucuma is a low glycemic sweetener, meaning that it does not rapidly increase blood glucose levels when consumed. It is a source of antioxidants, fiber, protein, carbohydrates, and vitamins and minerals such as beta-carotene, iron, zinc, vitamin B3, sodium, calcium, magnesium and phosphorous.
Luo Han	Luo Han is a natural sweetener made from the extract of a fruit by the same name; Luo Han plant is native to the Guangxi province in southwestern China. Luo Han means monk and Guo means fruit, and it has become know in the West as monk fruit.	The dried fruit is processed into a powder that contains mongrosides. These natural substances make luo han 300x sweeter than sugar. Luo han is low glycemic. It has been used as a natural sore throat, cough, and fever remedy in China for years.
Maple Syrup Maple Syrup Crystals	Maple Syrup is made from the sap of the sugar and black maple tree. A hole is drilled into the tree and a tap inserted to allow the sap to flow. The liquid obtained is mostly water and must be boiled down to produce the syrup. Maple Syrup Crystals is a powdered sweetener made by removing the water from the maple syrup.	Contains trace amounts of vitamin B2, B5, Niacin and Folic acid, and minerals: calcium, potassium, magnesium, iron, manganese and phosphorus. Is very high in sucrose. See maple syrup



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Mesquite flour	Mesquite flour is made from a leguminous plant that grows across Central and South America, Africa and Asia. The powdered seedpod is used as an alternative sweetener and thickener.	Mesquite flour is rich in soluble fiber and high in protein. It contains significant quantities of calcium, magnesium, potassium, iron and zinc. It is also low in carbohydrates, low in fat and rich in the amino acid lysine. Mesquite has an incredibly low Glycemic Index, due to its high level of dietary fiber and mineral content.
Molasses	Molasses is a thick syrup produced as a by-product during the refining of sugar cane; molasses is the residue that is left after the sugar crystals are extracted. Molasses is predominantly sucrose, with some glucose and fructose. Its flavour varies from very sweet to more bitter depending on the number of times it has been boiled. Food grade molasses is almost always made from sugar cane. Sugar beet molasses is very bitter and is mostly used as cattle feed or as a medium for growing yeast. Confirm 100% cane sugar	See blackstrap, dark, and light molasses
Molasses-Blackstrap	Blackstrap molasses is made from the third boiling of the sugar syrup. Blackstrap molasses is darkest in colour.	Blackstrap molasses is the most nutrient dense of all three types of molasses available. It is a source of essential vitamins and minerals such as iron, calcium, potassium, magnesium, manganese, copper and vitamin B6. These nutrients are beneficial for bone, heart, and colon health, when sugar can be tolerated. Commonly used as a vegetarian source of iron.
Molasses-Dark (aka Treacle)	Dark molasses is made from the second boiling of the sugar syrup.	Dark molasses will have a similar nutritional composition of Blackstrap but in lower percentages. Dark molasses has a higher sugar content as it is made from the second boiling of the sugar syrup.
Molasses-Granulated	Granulated Molasses is when the water is removed from molasses to create a high nutrient powdered sweetener.	High in sugar content. It still has some mineral content and is a better choice over refined sugar.
Molasses-Light (aka Golden Syrup)	Light molasses is made from the first boiling of the sugar syrup.	Light molasses is significantly less nutrient dense but will have trace amounts of the beneficial vitamins and minerals that are present in Blackstrap.
Sorghum Syrup	Sorghum Syrup is made from the sweet sorghum grass, which is naturally high in sugar. Sorghum is a type of grass that came originally from Africa but is now grown in America. The method of production is very similar to sugar cane molasses.	Provides vitamin B2, B6 and wide range of minerals such as calcium, copper, iron, magnesium, potassium, manganese, zinc and phosphorus.
Stevia	Stevia is an herb that has been used by indigenous peoples in South America for hundreds of years as a sweetener and medicine. Stevia extract powdered with maltodextrin is best avoided especially for people with a corn allergy. Maltodextrin is typically made from corn, which is a high GMO risk.	Stevia leaves get their sweet taste from natural compounds called steviol glycosides. Contains zero sugar, zero calories and zero macronutrients, is about 10-15 times sweeter than sugar. May induce overeating due to lack of nutrient content. May cause low blood sugar. Use in moderation.
SugaVida™	SugaVida™ is nectar of Palmyra palm tree (Borassus flabellifer) otherwise known as Palmyra jaggery. Every day between March and December a team of tappers climb up the Palmyra palm trees in order to make a cut in the fruit of Palmyra palm thus freeing its sap to flow into special baskets that collect the nectar. Tappers must climb each tree twice per day – once in the morning and once in the evening – as otherwise the cut will heal and then they would have to wait 15 days before they can make another cut without damaging the tree. Collecting and making Palmyra Jaggery is a laborious process that has to be done by hand and cannot be replicated by machine.	SugaVida™ is a superfood sweetener with a plant based bio-available source of Vitamin B12. It is only 3% fructose.
Tapioca syrup	Tapioca is made from the root vegetable cassava or yucca through a natural fermentation process of the starch.	Lower in calories and carbohydrates than sucrose. Non-GMO alternative to corn and potato. May cause loose bowels, use in moderation.
Yacon Syrup	Yacón syrup is extracted from the tuberous roots of the yacón plant indigenous to the Andes mountains. The tuber is ground down to extract the juice, which is then heated to reduce the moisture content. In order to qualify as a raw sweetener the temperature during production must not exceed approx 40 degrees centigrade.	Excellent dietary source of FOS (fructooligosaccharides), a prebiotic which is known to feed the friendly bacteria of the gut in addition to containing inulin fiber. High in antioxidants and potassium. May cause gas and digestive discomfort, not recommended for those with digestive issues like IBS.



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Fructose	Fructose is the primary sugar in fruit; however, commercial fructose is not extracted from fruit but typically derived from cane sugar, sugar beets or corn. Two times sweeter than sucrose. Fructose is often added to processed foods and drinks for palatability and taste enhancement, and for browning of some foods, such as baked goods. Cheap forms derived from cornstarch are used extensively in the food industry. High GMO risk.	Although low on the glycemic index, fructose is processed by the digestive system much like a fat and can contribute to insulin resistance, obesity, elevated blood pressure, triglycerides and LDL levels; and depletion of vitamins and minerals in the body.
Glucose/Dextrose	Glucose is a monosaccharide (simple sugar) often produced through enzymatic hydrolysis of starches such as corn, rice, wheat or cassava. Dextrose is derived from corn. Used to sweeten beverages, cereals, granola or commercial baked goods. High GMO risk.	Although glucose is naturally occurring in fresh or dried fruits and low amounts in grains, beans and vegetables, the commercial use of glucose is as a highly refined, processed food ingredient. It can contribute to obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer.
Grain Malts / Syrups including: Oat syrup /malt Brown Rice Syrup /malt Barley Syrup /malt Corn Malt Syrup	Grain malts or syrups are unrefined sweeteners produced by adding a small amount of the sprouted grain to cooked grain. This process activates the enzymes that are required to modify the grain's starches into sugars. Malts are then strained and cooked, becoming a golden syrup with a butterscotch flavour. Conventional Corn Malt high GMO risk.	Grain syrups tend to be less sweet than table sugar. Contains trace amounts of vitamins and minerals, but is not considered a significant source of any nutrients. Because malted syrup is primarily complex sugars, it is relatively slow to digest and does not result in rapid fluctuation in blood sugar.
Maltose	Maltose is the disaccharide produced when amylase breaks down starch. It is found in germinating seeds such as barley as they break down their starch stores to use for food. It is also produced when glucose is caramelized. Found in beverages, beer, cereal, pasta, potatoes; works best with flour and used in bread making. Less sweet than sugar therefore not typically used as a sweetener, but to extend food shelf life.	High on the glycemic index. Not suitable for diabetics. Too much can contribute to obesity, diabetes, tooth decay and other health concerns.
Refiner's Syrup Golden Syrup	Refiner's or Table syrup contains sucrose and invert sugar (sucrose broken down into its two component sugars, glucose and fructose)	Highly refined. Not suitable for diabetics. Too much can contribute to obesity, diabetes, tooth decay and other health concerns.
Cane Sugar (aka Sugar)	Native to warm, tropical regions, sugar cane is a grass with stout, jointed, fibrous stalks that is rich in sugars. The cane is crushed, producing cane juice, which is clarified and concentrated through heating and evaporation to produce a powdered sweetener. Conventional "sugar" is frequently made from GMO beet sugar	Cane sugar is primarily comprised of the monosaccharide sucrose. It contains no nutrients other than simple carbohydrates. What begins as 14% sucrose in the sugar cane stalk is processed to 99% - 100% sucrose. Sucrose (sugar) is a disaccharide made up of 50% glucose and 50% fructose and is broken down rapidly into its constituent parts.
Cane Sugar-Brown (aka Brown Sugar)	Brown sugar, not to be confused with naturally unrefined brown-coloured sugars, is white sugar (sucrose) with some of the molasses added back in after processing. Brown sugar contains from 3.5% molasses (light brown sugar) to 6.5% molasses (dark brown sugar). Brown sugar has a wet, sandy texture — though less sticky than muscovado sugar. Conventional "sugar" is frequently made from GMO beet sugar	See cane sugar
Cane Sugar - Icing (aka Confectioner's, Powdered)	Confectioner's Sugar is finely ground cane sugar. Cornstarch is typically blended in to prevent clumping. Cornstarch is high GMO risk.	Highly refined and as nutrient-void as white sugar.
Xylitol Maltitol Erythritol Sorbitol Mannitol	These monosaccharide polyols (sugar alcohols) are derived from fruits and vegetables. Often used in "sugar-free" chewing gums, mints, hard candies, chocolates etc... Xylitol: Derived from birch, berries, oats, mushrooms, corn and cane sugar. Maltitol: Produced by the hydrogenation of maltose obtained from starch. Erythritol: Produced by fermentation of glucose, typically corn. Typically combined with other sweeteners. Occurs naturally in pears, soy sauce, wine, sake, watermelon and grapes. Sorbitol: Obtained from the reduction of glucose typically derived from corn syrup, apples, peaches, pears and prunes. Mannitol: Produced by the hydrogenation of fructose typically formed from starch or sucrose. All the sugar substitutes that end in (ol) are considered diabetic friendly except for sorbitol. High GMO risk from various starches.	Since sugar alcohols are not digested the same way as sugar they are a low calorie, low glycemic alternative. Excessive use can have a laxative effect and the use of sugar alcohols is not recommended for people with IBS and other gastrointestinal conditions. Xylitol: Antifungal properties and beneficial for dental health. No aftertaste. Maltitol: Highest glycemic index of the sugar alcohols. Erythritol: Not as sweet as other sugar alcohols. Tends to be well tolerated with no gas or bloating. Sorbitol: Overconsumption may increase retinal neuropathy in those with hyperglycemia and poorly controlled diabetes.



Sweetener (alphabetical)	Definition	Nutrition
Acesulfame-K	Artificial Sweetener. Acesulfame K is 200 times sweeter than sucrose and about 2/3 as sweet as saccharin. Like saccharin, it has a slightly bitter aftertaste, especially at high concentrations.	
Aspartame	Artificial Sweetener. A non-saccharide sweetener used as a sugar substitute in some foods and beverages.	
Beet Sugar	A simple sugar refined from sugar beets. High risk GMO crop. 90% + of sugar beet crops are GMO.	
High Fructose Corn Syrup Glucose-Fructose	High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS)—also called Glucose-Fructose in Canada, comprises any of a group of corn syrups that have undergone enzymatic processing to convert some of its glucose into fructose to produce a desired sweetness. Because of its low price HFCS is commonly used in processed foods.	
Saccharin	Artificial Sweetener. Saccharin is 300 times as sweet as sucrose, but has a bitter or metallic aftertaste, especially at high concentrations. It is used to sweeten products such as drinks, candies, cookies, medicines, and toothpaste.	
Sucralose	Artificial Sweetener. The majority of ingested sucralose is not broken down by the body, so it is considered noncaloric. Sucralose is about 320 to 1,000 times as sweet as sucrose.	
Sulfured Molasses	Sulfured molasses, has had sulfur dioxide added as a preservative. Generally, only young sugarcane requires this treatment.	

This document was compiled from many sources. A full list of resources is available at Customer Service. The majority of these products are currently available at The Big Carrot and we continue to seek out the best the market has to offer. Check out our [website](#) for recipe ideas.