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# The Truth About Coconut Water



Coconut water is a big business, raking in almost half a billion dollars in sales last year. Just 10 years ago, most Americans hadn't even heard of coconut water. Today, coconut water is considered the natural and healthy alternative to sports drinks, but it comes with a hefty price tag.

Should you be drinking coconut water?  
Here's what you need to know:

Coconut water is the clear liquid found inside the hollow of a coconut. It is not to be confused with coconut milk or cream, which is a liquid puree of the coconut meat itself. Coconut water is extracted from young, green coconuts, when the proportion of water to meat is highest.

Coconut water is very popular in Central and South America, the Pacific Islands, and other tropical regions. Fresh coconut water is served directly from the fruit by cracking a small hole on top for the insertion of a straw.

In the last decade, coconut water has caught on strongly in the U.S., with several popular brands being distributed in health stores at first, and now at every supermarket.

Nutritionally, coconut water can be considered a juice. It has a natural sweetness and a variety of natural

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*NOTE: Some sentiments contained within "What We're Reading" articles may not strictly conform with PROJECT: PFC's nutritional outlook. We read articles containing opposing information all the time and derive our nutritional philosophies from the latest science, the opinions of experts worldwide and our anecdotal experiences in the field. We keep an open mind and a strong affinity for fact-based evidence to help make the world of nutrition "Simple Again" for you.*

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Nutritionally, coconut water can be considered a juice. It has a small amount of natural sugars and other nutrients. A single cup serving of coconut water will set you back 45 calories. It has 2.5 teaspoons of sugars, no fat, and 500mg of potassium (similar to a banana).

Various brands of coconut water tout themselves as all-natural energy drinks. They list health benefits such as alkaline balance, kidney cleansing, and others. Some brands, like Vita Coco, also add vitamin C (probably for its preservative qualities as Ascorbic Acid).

Whether all the health benefits mentioned above are true or not, coconut water sure beats Gatorade sports drinks. It has less ingredients, uses less chemicals (colorings), and less sugar.

However, water trumps them both – for most people. A banana will supply your electrolyte needs for most workouts shorter than an hour. If you want to enjoy an exotic sweet treat that, have some coconut water. But don't believe all the marketing hype around it.

What has been your experience with coconut water?



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