

SPOTLIGHT ON... coconut oil



TRY COCONUT OIL...

- Choose cold-pressed, unrefined coconut oil (refined coconut oil is often exposed to high levels of processing and heat, which may remove many of the benefits).
- Coconut oil has a high heating point, which means it solidifies under 24°C – you can easily sit the jar in a bowl of hot water to liquefy before using if you desire.
- Add it to smoothies, use it in place of butter or margarine when baking, and instead of other types of oil when stir-frying.
- Try 'oil pulling': take one tablespoon of coconut oil and swish it around your mouth to detoxify.
- Use it as a natural way to remove make-up or as a massage oil, or use to make a DIY hair mask.

Use it in your stir-fries, or smooth it over your skin! Nutritionist Sally Joseph takes a look at how to harness the tropical power of unrefined coconut oil.

Coconut oil is one of nature's original superfoods – over the centuries, people all over the world have incorporated it into their diets and celebrated the many health benefits associated with it. In recent years, there has been a lot of conflicting information surrounding whether or not

this oil is actually good for us. Much of the debate stems from the confusion surrounding different types of fats and their links to disease and obesity. Extra virgin, cold pressed coconut oil is technically a saturated fat, which sends many of us running for the gym, but the truth is, not all saturated fats were created equal!

Virgin coconut oil is different to other types of saturated fats because it contains medium-chain fatty acids, which are actually 'healthy' fats. These healthy fats contain antimicrobial properties that can have a wide range of positive effects such as helping to boost your immune system. This tropical crusader is also increasingly gaining favour as a cooking oil because of its

high smoke point, which means it can be heated to higher temperatures than other oils without burning and oxidising.

The benefits extend to our hair and skin, too, explaining why coconut oil is commonly used in beauty products. If used as a moisturiser, coconut oil can protect your skin from the effects of ageing by improving the appearance of fine lines and helping to keep connective tissue supple and strong.



SALLY JOSEPH is a leading nutritionist and a health and wellbeing coach with 14 years' experience. For more details, visit her website sallyjoseph.com.au

banana & blueberry smoothie

Prep 5 mins | Serves 1

Blend 1 cup blueberries, 1 banana, 1 tbs macro wholefoods organic virgin coconut oil and 1 tsp honey together until smooth. Add ½ cup milk or natural yoghurt, ¼ cup orange juice and ice. Blend until combined. Serve.

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Top tip

Mix coconut oil with room temperature ingredients first, before adding cold ingredients, so it blends evenly.

PHOTOGRAPHY CRAIG WALL & JEREMY SIMONS STYLING JENN TOLHURST & SARAH O'BRIEN
RECIPE DEVELOPMENT CHRISTINE SHEPPARD FOOD PREPARATION JULIE BALLARD



coconut popcorn

Cook 5 mins | **Serves** lots

Heat 2 tbs macro wholefoods organic virgin coconut oil in a large heavy based saucepan. When melted, add ½ cup popping corn and cover with lid. Cook for 3-4 minutes, shaking pot occasionally until 'popping' stops. Remove from heat and carefully remove lid. Add salt and flavour (see right), if desired and shake or stir with a large spoon to coat evenly. Make cone

shapes with baking paper.

Fill with popcorn. Serve.

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flavours

- Finely grated parmesan and black pepper
- Ground cumin and chilli flakes
- Garlic powder and dried herbs
- Cinnamon and brown sugar



Top tip

Coconut oil is perfect for stir-frying, as it has a higher smoking point than most other oils.

pork, pineapple & coconut stir-fry

Prep 10 mins | Cook 8 mins | Serves 4

2 tbs macro wholefoods market organic virgin coconut oil
500g pork fillet, sliced
3 garlic cloves, crushed
1 tbs finely shredded ginger
2 tbs oyster sauce
2 tbs palm sugar
1 red capsicum, deseeded and sliced
¼ fresh pineapple, peeled, cored, cut into chunks

4 spring onions, sliced
1 bunch choy sum, roughly chopped
steamed jasmine rice, to serve

1 Heat oil in wok until smoking. Add the pork, garlic and ginger. Stir-fry until golden. Add oyster sauce and palm sugar and toss well to coat. Add capsicum, pineapple, spring onions and choy sum and stir-fry for 1 minute.

2 Serve stir-fry with jasmine rice.

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