

6 Wonderful Sweeteners Better For You Than Sugar



Even if you never touch dessert it's still easy to have too much sugar in your diet. We all know now that sugar is virtually everywhere in our food system. Plan Z dieters know to stay away from things like bread, pasta, pancakes, baked goods, sodas, fruit drinks, and virtually every processed food. When you include HFCS (high fructose corn syrup) it seems like sugar is everywhere.

Good news is once you're in ZReboot and beyond, you can still enjoy sweets and not totally blow a low carb existence. You don't have to feel deprived either.

One trick is to concentrate on NATURAL sugar sources. Obviously, you'll have to keep them in check and not go crazy with these but here are some ideas on how you can use them. Leave all the chemistry involved in processed table sugar and artificial sweeteners by the wayside. *That means diet soda is not your friend.* Research has proven that it never really made you skinnier, and some new research even links it to overeating.

Here are the top 6 sweeteners to use when you're living a low

carb life:



Stevia

This product is not perfect, but it's natural, it has vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and ZERO calories. You can use it to sweeten anything that does not need heat. That's when it tastes the best, like with plain, unsweetened yogurt with a little stevia and vanilla stirred in. Add berries and nuts on top and you've got a healthy breakfast that will keep you full until lunch.

Stevia comes in a granular form and in liquid drops, too. You can use the flavored drops to make your own diet soda. Pick up plain sparkling water and then add stevia drops. They even have cola flavored drops now. You can make grape soda, orange,

strawberry, cherry, lemon-lime...even cream soda. And there are flavored stevia drops that will make a delightful cup of flavored coffee. Save the money on those fancy coffee drinks you stand in line for at a coffee shop and make your own in about 2 extra seconds. You can find flavored stevia drops in the baking supply section of your grocery store, usually on the bottom shelf.



Raw Honey

I always recommend you get your food from the closest source possible. So, if you're in ZReboot 3.5 or later and are at the point where you can enjoy honey, the beekeeper at your local farmer's market is a prime guy/gal to get to know. Raw honey has vitamins and minerals in it, too. The glycemic index is reasonable at 35. Any food with a glycemic index under 50 is

pretty good, but you still have to watch your intake. You can't go overboard. A little drizzle goes a long way.



Erythritol

This is found naturally in many fruits and vegetables. Erythritol has some real bonuses. Zero on the glycemic index. Zero calories. This one is a sugar alcohol. And the best news is it caramelizes. That means if you bake cookies with it, they will get the lovely crunch around the edges you're striving for. My favorite brands are ZSweet and Swerve. I have never seen either of these in a store so you'll likely have to order online. There are other brands you can look into, too. You can make frosting with the powdered version. A cream cheese frosting made with this is about as close to dessert-healthy as

you can get. Make a low carb cake and you have the makings of a healthy version of a birthday party! Erythritol is slightly less sweet than sugar but in truth, I cut the amount necessary for a recipe by about 1/3 to half and I'm satisfied that the end product is sweet enough. You'll find your own sweet spot.



Coconut Sugar

The good news about coconut sugar is it contains potassium, magnesium, zinc, vitamin B1 and vitamin C. Table sugar has no redeeming value at all. You've never heard of coconut sugar? Let's fix that. Coconut sugar is also called coconut palm sugar. It comes from coconut blossoms; before they form coconuts. Coconut sugar is half the glycemic index of table sugar which is a huge plus. That means it won't jack up your insulin as much as

regular sugar will.

Coconut sugar is a light brown color. Some people put a little in coffee (ZReboot 3.5 or later, obviously) if they have to have sugar. That's the only reason I keep it around. If I have a guest who has to have sugar in coffee, this is a better alternative. If you like making baked goods you can find plenty of low carb recipes that use coconut sugar. Again, cut it back from what the recipe says if you dare to stay even more low carb.



Pure Maple Syrup

In a dressing or a sauce that needs a sweet taste sometimes, I'll use a little drizzle of maple syrup. Don't worry, it doesn't make a sauce taste like syrup! Be sure to get the real stuff though; not that sugar water flavored with maple. When I make pancakes now I'm more likely to top them with chopped up fruit flavored with stevia or even whipped cream flavored with stevia but a little drizzle (and I'm talking 2 tsp or less) of real syrup can go a long way too. Here's my low carb pumpkin pancake recipe. Try these pancakes that are low carb and much healthier and choose your own topping. I'd even give a nod to a little of the whipped cream with a drizzle of the maple syrup on top. Wink, wink. And don't forget the butter!



Blackstrap Molasses

My last offering is also a sugar option that has plenty of vitamins and minerals. The folks living on the prairie in the olden days knew about this and used it as a sweetener. This was a cheap sweetener when the refined stuff we are familiar with today was very expensive. Regular people ate blackstrap molasses. Try to find unsulphured. That's the healthiest version. Use a drizzle in a dressing. Or make a poultry glaze with it in place of other sugar. Barbecue sauce is another option. But like I said before, cut it back. Use mostly stevia in a barbecue sauce and just put in a tidbit of this for extra flavor.

No sugar is good for you in major quantities. The average American now consumes over 150 pounds of sugar a year. No wonder there's an obesity crisis. At the turn of 1900, that number was 7.5 pounds of sugar a year. We have come a long way... and it's not a good way to be.

So do yourself a favor and try to stay off the sugar. When in "need" consider incorporating these.

For this week's featured recipe indulge your sweet tooth without overdoing the carbs. My pumpkin pancakes with pumpkin spiced whipped cream are a delightful way to start your day.

Cheers,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Zola', with a long, sweeping underline.



Pumpkin Pancakes with Pumpkin Spiced Whipped Cream

This makes 12, 4" pancakes. The carbohydrate count will be very low on these cakes. They fill you up too. If you want your kids "full and focused" before school give them these instead of cereal.