

# Nutrition Bites



## Coconut Milk: Why We Use It

Coconut milk is a staple of Eastern and South American cultures, where coconuts are widely available, and its benefits well-known. It is high in (healthy) saturated fatty acids and medium-chain triglycerides (MCT), which are both easily burned as fuel by the body. MCTs are particularly beneficial in that they don't require bile acids for digestion, and they're directly shunted to the liver via the portal vein<sup>1</sup>. Coconut milk adds body to many dishes and a distinct flavor and can be substituted for part of the water when making brown rice for a delicious creamy rice. Using coconut milk in smoothies is a great way to substitute dairy and make a great breakfast choice – especially in the summer.

Coconut milk is simple to make and contains an abundance of nutrients:

- ✓ Vitamins C and E help boost the immune system
- ✓ B vitamins provide energy to the cells
- ✓ Magnesium, nature's muscle & vein relaxer, regulates heart rhythm, and can prevent stroke and heart attack
- ✓ Potassium supports function of nerve cells, prevents muscle contractions, and maintains fluid balance in the body
- ✓ Lauric acid has many germ-fighting, anti-fungal and anti-viral properties
- ✓ Antioxidants can boost immunity while rebuilding damaged cells in the body



1. Chris Kresser <<http://chriskresser.com>>

## This Week's Recipe

### Coconut Masala with Vegetables

Makes 5 servings | Prep time: 30 mins | Cooking time: 30 minutes

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|---------------------------|---|
| 1 Tbs olive oil           | 14 ounces diced tomatoes in juice           |
| 1 cups chopped onion      | 3 cups cauliflower florets                  |
| 1 Tbs minced garlic       | 2 cups peeled and cubed yams                |
| 1 tsp garam masala        | 3 cups green beans, trimmed and cut in half |
| 1 tsp curry powder        | 1/2 13 ounce can coconut milk               |
| 1 tsp ground coriander    | 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro              |
| 3/4 tsp turmeric          | 2 Tbs chopped green onion tops (green part) |
| 1/8 tsp cayenne pepper    |   |
| 3/4 tsp sea salt          |   |
| 3/4 Tbs fresh lemon juice |   |

- 1 Heat coconut oil in large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add onions; sauté until deep golden, about 20 minutes. Add garlic and all spices and salt; stir 1 minute. Cool to lukewarm.
- 2 Put tomatoes in a large pot, and using an immersion blender, puree with juice (or use a blender or food processor). Add the onion mixture; puree until almost smooth. Season mixture (masala) to taste with salt and pepper. Add coconut milk, lemon juice and half of the green onions and cilantro. Stir.
- 3 Blanch each of the vegetables separately just until cooked through.
- 4 Add the vegetables to the masala. Serve over steamed brown rice and garnish with remaining green onions and cilantro.

### IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER

Coconut milk is widely available in stores, but not all brands are the same. The ones in cartons usually contain too many added ingredients, so canned is better. When buying canned coconut milk, use BPA-free cans (Native Forest is the only organic BPA-free brand so far).

You can also make your own coconut milk to avoid added ingredients in cans and cartons.

Purchase coconut cream (Artisana is a good choice) and blend with water to make coconut milk or use organic shredded coconut as follows:

- 2 cups water & 1 cup unsweetened coconut flakes
- Heat water until hot (but not boiling).
- Add shredded coconut and water to blender. Blend on high for several min-