

Fife in *The Coconut Oil Miracle* it is suitable to use whatever type you prefer.

Is coconut oil mentioned in the Bible?

No, but it comes under the general category of *Genesis 1:29*. Taking the Bible as my authority wherever possible for foods and nutritional guidance, I have advocated primarily olive oil and butter. However, it must be kept in mind that coconut palms historically have not been grown in the Middle East, the geographical focus of the biblical record. Thus, we may follow the general biblical principle in regard to coconut oil, that *God saw all that he had made and it was very good*. Also, Jesus promised that *the meek shall inherit the earth*, meaning all the good things of the earth that God has created to provide for the health and well being of mankind. Thus we can rejoice in our day that we now have access to coconut oil and a wealth of increasing information about its benefits to health.



Talking Food Pages

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Benefits of Coconut Oil

Coconut oil is a highly saturated tropical oil derived from coconuts of the coconut palm tree. Traditionally it has provided many health benefits to the peoples who live in areas of the tropics and subtropics where coconut palms grow. Many newly discovered health benefits are now being unearthed through careful research and use in clinical practices.

In recent decades we have been taught to fear saturated fats as the prime dietary contributor to heart disease. Such fear has generated the flourishing of vegetable oil margarines, polyunsaturated fats and the soybean industry besides the reduction of meats, particularly red meats, in the diet and the use of fat free or lowfat dairy products. The first response I receive, therefore, to "Coconut oil is good for you," is, "But isn't that saturated fat? I thought saturated fat was bad for you."

There is a double reason not to fear coconut oil. First, it is highly debatable that saturated fats cause heart disease. Uffe Ravnskov, MD, PhD in *The Cholesterol Myths* (www.NewTrends Publishing.com) presents the results of exhaustive research over the decades to disprove this theory. Secondly, the saturated fat of coconut oil is different than the long chain fatty acids of meats and also of polyunsaturated fats.

The saturated fat of coconut oil is made up of medium chain fatty acids which act entirely differently in the body. These medium chain fatty acids are made up of 48% lauric acid, 8% caprylic acid and 7% capric acid besides other beneficial fatty acids. Lauric acid is particularly beneficial to health. By way of comparison, butter, in general, primarily contains short chain fatty acids with 4-8 carbon atoms, while long chain fatty acids (18-22 carbon atoms) are primarily found in monounsaturated oils (as olive oil), polyunsaturated oils, and in meats and fish. The medium chain fatty acids of coconut oil contain 8-12 carbon atoms.

The stability of coconut oil for storage and safe use in cooking and baking is precisely due to its high saturated content. It may be stored for reasonable lengths of time at room temperature without going disadvantages of milk. It is also a great alternative to use in recipes that

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rancid. In cooking and baking, there need be no fear no breakdown forming any harmful by-products. But you should not let in smoke.

The use of olive oil and butter for baking, and for cooking at moderate temperatures still stands. However, the emergence of coconut oil upon the public mind, much of it thanks to the Internet, has brought its wonderful benefits and availability to our attention. As a result, we are incorporating its use as one of the good-fat alternatives in our recipes in the **SueGreggCookbooks**.

The following present a birdseye view of many of the benefits of coconut oil. For indepth explanations and details, read *The Coconut Oil Miracle* by Bruce Fife, C.N., N.D (www.ppnf.org).

- Protects against heart disease.
- Protects against cancer.
- Protects against diabetes.
- Acts as an antioxidant in its resistance to attack by free radicals, protecting against degenerative diseases, in general.
- Protects from a range of infectious diseases. Fife lists 28 infectious and degenerative disease conditions that coconut oil can help to relieve, reduce or prevent.
- Strengthens the immune system. Its medium chain fatty acids can kill a number of viruses. Fife in *The Coconut Oil Miracle* lists 24 microorganisms killed by lauric acid, include HIV virus, influenza virus, leukemia virus, Hepatitis C virus, among others.
- Assists in healing of fungal and yeast infections (i.e. *candida*).
- May protect against parasites, such as giardia found in many water supplies leading to a host of symptoms and problems.
- Used in infant formulas as easiest fat for baby's immature digestive system to digest.
- Useful in digestive or malabsorption problems.
- Used predominately by the body for energy and seldom stored as body fat, it assists in weight management and control. Also increases metabolism providing a higher level of energy and burning of calories. For more information focusing on the role of coconut oil in weight loss read *Eat Fat, Lose Fat* by Dr. Mary Inig and Sally Fallon.

- Used on skin, builds up resistance to UV sunlight, allowing longer periods gradually in the sun without damage.
- Protects the skin from invading germs we come into contact with daily.
- Can help to sooth and heal skin injuries and hemorrhoids.
- Contributes to beautiful, youthful skin and hair. Acting as a hair conditioner, it eliminates the need for any other hair conditioner.

What are the disadvantages of using coconut oil? Nutritionally there are none. I can identify four disadvantages: 1) availability, 2) cost, 3) taste, and 4) seasonal hardness.

- Availability. Search the internet or go to your local health food store and see what types and brands are available.
- Cost. Compare prices. Unrefined virgin or extra virgin coconut oil is very expensive. I have found *Spectrum Naturals* brand, which is organic and expeller pressed, the least costly, both refined and unrefined. Go to India and buy it. It costs next to nothing there. A more cost-effective idea is to have a friend from India who lives in America and will bring you some when she goes to visit. This is what my friend, Ruth, did for me. In India, coconut oil is used like typical Americans use soy oil.
- Taste. People seem to either love coconut flavor or dislike it entirely. Unrefined coconut oil, as the virgin coconut oil is stronger flavor than the refined. Choose according to your tastes.
- Seasonal hardness. In cold or cool weather, coconut oil can be very hard, making it difficult to extract from the jar with a spoon. A little warming up will ease this problem. But even if you warm it, it will harden again upon standing. For this reason, I don't use it in stage 1 of blender batters. I use melted butter or olive oil instead. Another option is to add it in stage 2 of recipes; but this doesn't work easily in blender batters, because the liquid fat is needed to easily blend the grain in stage 1. In warm or hot weather it can be even liquid at room temperature, making it easy to use in blender recipes in stage 1.

For cooking and baking, what form of coconut oil is best?

- For sautéing, use refined coconut oil which is suitable over medium to high heat. I use *Spectrum Naturals* refined coconut oil. Since I like butter flavor in sautéed vegetables, I put about half coconut oil and half butter in the fry pan. The coconut oil will keep the butter from burning.
- For baking, you can use unrefined or refined *Spectrum Naturals* coconut oil. Use whichever your budget and taste will allow. According to