



WHY CAROB IS A 'SUPER' FOOD

The carob tree, known also by its beautiful botanical name *Ceratonia siliqua*, is native to the Mediterranean as well as Western Asia where it has been cultivated for over 4 thousand years. This large evergreen tree produces sweet carob pods that are actually classified as legumes. The pods or seeds can be eaten as they are but are most often found ground and sold as carob powder.

Carob is considered to be a beneficial food as it is high in many nutrients, is caffeine free, is low in fat, high in protein, is low-allergenic, non-addictive and contains healthful anti-oxidants. It is often used in elimination diets and detox programs as it is very gentle on the body and is a healthy carbohydrate source.

Carob is rich in calcium and potassium both of which are known to reduce muscle cramping, enhance bone integrity and improve heart health. It is high in B6 for balanced moods and for reducing premenstrual symptoms. It also contains a broad range of vitamins and minerals including vitamin A, B2, B3 and B6 and the minerals copper, manganese, zinc, selenium and magnesium.

Carob is highly nutritious, naturally sweet and can be used as a healthy alternative to cacao and cocoa.

Carob is also an excellent source of beneficial dietary fibre including pectin, a type of soluble fibre, which helps to slow down digestion. This gives our body time to absorb nutrients from our food and to maintain balanced blood sugars. Pectin feeds our healthy gut flora, can help to reduce LDL (bad) cholesterol and studies are showing promising results for its role in reducing the risk of colon cancer. Another bonus of the fibre in carob is that it has been shown to reduce the hunger hormone, ghrelin. This means that if you eat carob with your meal, you will fill up faster and be less prone to over eating.

There are many way to use carob, the most popular being simply as an alternative to using chocolate due to its naturally sweet flavour. It can be used to make anything that has cocoa or cacao as an ingredient such as chocolate cake, hot chocolate and chocolate desserts. It can also be used to replace half the cocoa/cacao in a recipe so it will still have a chocolate taste but with the nutritional benefits of carob. Also, due to the natural sweetness of carob, the sugar content of the recipe can be reduced.

Using carob powder is safe to use for those with food allergies or sensitive digestion including children and those susceptible to migraines.

Enjoy your week in the Kitchen,

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