

Coconut Milk

To make coconut milk, finely grated coconut meat is steeped in hot water until it is cool enough to handle. It is then squeezed until dry; the white fluid is strained to remove all the pulp.

Taste: Coconut milk has a strong flavor all its own. It is typically a standout in whatever it is added to, from beverages to desserts to the main course.

Uses: Coconut milk is a natural born star in Thai and Caribbean cooking. In addition to savory foods, when used in place of cow's milk, coconut milk gives a nice tropical flavor to desserts, drinks, and breads.

Purchase: Coconut milk is readily available in cans in the Asian foods section of most grocery stores. It can be found in both light and regular versions. However, if you want to keep the fat content down, your best value will be to purchase regular coconut milk, skim off the cream (excellent for other recipes), and thin it with water to create "light" coconut milk. Regular coconut milk is usually of superior quality to canned light coconut milk, which typically contains more additives. Coconut milk varies from brand to brand in quality and flavor, so be sure to try a few in order to pinpoint your favorite. Good brands of coconut milk, will have thick cream floating on top of the can while the milk on the bottom will be much more watery. Brands with milk that appears homogenized tend to have an artificial taste due to excess processing or additives. Of course, a good selection of conventional, natural, and organic coconut milk brands can easily be found online.

Storage Tips: Coconut milk should be refrigerated once the can is opened. It keeps for a couple of days up to one week.

Special Notes:

- Although coconut milk contains a fair quantity of saturated fat, it has been shown in many studies to be a "good" saturated fat, easily metabolized by the body. In fact, many doctors and scientists now recognize Coconut Milk as a beneficial contributor to a healthy lifestyle. In addition, coconut oil is continuously being researched for its powerful anti-viral, anti-fungal and anti-microbial properties. As a vegetable oil, Coconut Oil does not contain cholesterol.
- For recipes requiring coconut cream, do not shake the can before opening; spoon out the thick cream on top. On hot days, refrigerate the can so that the cream will harden and can be easily separated from the lighter milk.

Recipes:

- Homemade Coconut Milk