

# Amazing Facts...About Honey

**Honey never spoils.** No need to refrigerate it. It can be stored unopened, indefinitely, at room temperature in a dry cupboard.

Honey is one of the **oldest foods in existence.** It was found in the tomb of King Tut and was still edible since honey never spoils.

Due to the high level of fructose, **honey is 25% sweeter than table sugar.**

Honey is created when bees mix plant nectar, a sweet substance secreted by flowers, with their own **bee enzymes.**

To make honey, bees drop the collected nectar into the honeycomb and then evaporate it by **fanning their wings.**

Honey has different **flavors and colors,** depending on the location and kinds of flowers the bees visit. Climatic conditions of the area also influence its flavor and color.

To keep their hives strong, beekeepers must place them in locations that will provide abundant nectar sources as well as **water.**

In the days before biology and botany were understood, people thought it was a special kind of **magic** that turned flower nectar into honey.

## Honeybee facts

- A single bee colony can produce more than 100 pounds of extra honey and this is what is harvested by the beekeeper.
- It takes one colony of honey bees (around 30,000 bees) to pollinate an acre of fruit trees. Pollination success increases if there are more honey bees present at the time of peak flowering.
- A colony of honey bees in early spring has 10,000-15,000 bees.
- A colony of honey bees in summer has 50-60,000 bees.
- A honey bee flies up to 15 mph and its wings beat 200 times per second or 12,000 beats / minute.
- A normal colony of honey bees contains only one QUEEN who may lay 2,000 eggs per day during her busy season
- There may be 60,000 or more WORKER bees (undeveloped females ) who do all the work. There will also be several hundred DRONES (Male bees).
- A worker bee gathers in her entire life 1/10 tsp of honey.
- It requires 10000 worker bees to gather a pound of honey.
- Bees fly the equivalent of more than twice around the world to gather a pound of honey.
- The average life of a honey bee during the working season is about six weeks.
- Nectar as gathered by the bee contains about 70% water (Honey is about 17% water).
- Bees remove the excess moisture from nectar by rapidly fanning their wings over the open cells in the hive.
- Honey varies in color from white through golden to dark brown and usually the darker the color the stronger the flavor.
- The value of bees pollinating fruits, vegetables and legumes is 10 times the value of honey produced. Natural pollinators are disappearing rapidly and each year we become more

dependent on honey bees for many of our daily foods.

- Honey is one of the safest food - most harmful bacteria cannot live in honey for any length of time.

## HONEY VS SUGAR - WHAT ARE THEIR DIFFERENCES?

Both sweeteners contain glucose and fructose. However, for sugar, in the process of manufacturing, the organic acids, protein, nitrogen elements, enzymes and vitamins in the sugar cane are destroyed, whereas honey, a natural sweetener, subjects only to minimal heating. Also, honey has certain beneficial antioxidant and antimicrobial properties which are not present in table sugar.

Here are three honey nutrition facts that will make you feel good about eating honey:

### **One:**

One tablespoon of table sugar or sucrose contains 46 calories, while one tablespoon of natural sweetener honey has 64 calories. Though honey may have more calories, we actually need to use less of it since it is sweeter than table sugar. As a result, you may in fact consume even less amount of calories that you would with sugar. And in the long run even though honey is more expensive, it may be more economical than table sugar. I was taken aback when I first found out how much table sugar I was consuming when I take a can of coke -- 10 teaspoons, and a 50g chocolate bar -- 7 teaspoons!

### **Two:**

Table sugar is sucrose, which is made up of two molecules bonded together. When we eat table sugar, our stomach has to use its own enzymes to separate the molecules apart before we can use the sugar's energy. Honey is quite different. The bees have added a special enzyme to the nectar that divides the sucrose into glucose and fructose -- two simple sugars for our bodies can absorb directly.

Hence, honey vs sugar, honey has a healthier Glycemic Index (GI) which measures the negative impact of a given food on the blood-glucose level. The lower the GI rating, the slower the absorption and infusion of sugars into the bloodstream and hence a more gradual and healthier digestion process.

### **Three:**

Unlike honey, table sugar lacks minerals and vitamins (hence it's been often called empty calories), they draw upon the body's nutrients to be metabolized into the system. When these nutrients are all used up, metabolizing of undesirable cholesterol and fatty acid is impeded, contributing to higher cholesterol and promoting obesity due to higher fatty acid on the organs and tissues. That is why it is not uncommon for fat people to suffer from malnutrition and many other health related problems. So the message is, honey vs sugar, if you are watching your weight, honey will be a smarter choice than sugar. Besides the differences in nutrition, I feel sugar can never compete with honey in taste. Though both are sweet, honey has such a unique flavor that can be very useful and superior in many foods and beverages. The range of honey floral varieties is so vast that experiencing for yourself the uniqueness of each variety and being able to appropriate each variety to exploit every possibility to complement and improve taste of different types of foods becomes a skillful art.

# THREE VALUABLE PROPERTIES OF HONEY

## 1. Honey is Hygroscopic

Honey has a hygroscopic nature, which means when exposed to air, it naturally absorbs moisture in from the air. In treating open wounds, honey is useful as it could help prevent scarring by keeping the skin moist, encourage the growth of new tissues, and allow easy removal of any dressing by preventing dressing from becoming stuck to the skin. Honey's hygroscopic properties also make it an ideal ingredient in a lot of cosmetics as it helps keep skin hydrated and fresh and prevents drying. Thus, some people call honey a natural "humectant" as it attracts and retains moisture. When used in skin and hair treatments, honey trap and seal in the moisture leaving skin soft and supple, and hair glossy and healthy.

## 2. Honey is Antibacterial

Researchers began to document the healing properties of honey in the early part of the 20th century. This ceased with the development of antibiotics but recently the development of resistance to antibiotics has led to a resurgence of interest into the healing properties of honey. The effective antimicrobial agent in honey prohibits the growth of certain bacteria. It contains an enzyme that produces hydrogen peroxide which is believed to be the main reason for the antimicrobial activity of honey. As such, honey is a useful treatment for wounds and scalds. Cuts, abrasions and scalds can be covered in honey to prevent bacteria from entering the wound and promote healing.

Honey can help treat minor acne by attacking the bacteria that cause the outbreaks while moisturizing the skin to aid rejuvenation. Types of honey differ greatly in their antimicrobial potency, varying as much as a hundred fold. Honey derived from the Manuka bush, found in abundance in New Zealand, claims the highest potency of such antimicrobial properties.

## 3. Honey is a Source of Antioxidants

Honey contains natural antioxidant properties that can destroy biologically destructive chemical agents which have been linked to many diseases such as cancer. Studies also found that dark-color honeys such as Buckwheat seem to possess more antioxidants than light-color varieties. Not only could honey's antioxidants help to eliminate free radicals in the body, they are also part of the nutrient supply for growth of new tissue. These precious honey properties help protect the skin under the sun and help the skin to rejuvenate and stay young-looking. As such, there have been an increasing number of manufacturers of honey skincare products such as sunscreens and facial cleansing products for treating damaged or dry skin.



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