

SPOTLIGHT ON RAPADURA

WHAT IS IT?

Rapadura sugar is an unrefined cane sugar. It is less refined than other sugars - including 'brown sugar' which is actually refined white sugar with molasses added back on to give it the brown colour.

It comes from the pure juice extracted from sugar cane. It's not cooked at high temperatures and doesn't have chemicals or caking agents added to it. It has a grainy texture rather than a crystallised one because it's not heavily processed.

WHY IS IT A PREFERRED OPTION?

It is less refined, so closer to whole! It has a higher content of several vitamins and minerals and contains iron, which white sugar doesn't. Due to less processing it retains the natural balance of sucrose, glucose, and fructose, and contains components essential for its digestion. It is metabolised more slowly than white sugar so won't affect your blood sugar levels as much as more refined sugars.

Even though rapadura is popular in wholefood kitchens, that doesn't mean you can eat it all day! There is now much research linking excess sugar consumption to a number of diseases and chronic illnesses. "That Sugar Film" is available in iTunes and I recommend you rent it and watch it. Big eye opener.

For me, choosing a sweetener like rapadura and using it in moderation feels OK. But it's best to inform yourself and experiment with what works FOR YOU! There are many programs out there to help you remove cravings for sugar.

SMALL STEP:

Try substituting rapadura for 'normal' sugar in one of your favourite sweet treat recipes. Swapping with brown sugar is a no-brainer as the texture will be similar, but when substituting with white or raw sugar be prepared for a different result.

Nutritionist Cyndi O'Meara recommends starting with dark cakes - like chocolate! The difference will be less noticeable. While you can substitute 1:1, I often halve the amount of sugar in recipes these days - try it and see!

WHERE TO BUY RAPADURA:

- Supermarket (health food or baking aisle) - note depending on where it comes from it can be called any of these names as well Panela, Raspadura, Chancaca or Piloncillo.
- Health Food Shops
- Food co-operatives
- Cyndi O'Meara's Changing Habits [online store](#)

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WAYS TO USE RAPADURA:

I use it in all my cakes, here are some recipes:

- [Basic Vanilla Cake](#)
- [Healthy & Moist Banana Oat Muffins](#)
- [Easy One Bowl Chocolate Raspberry Cake](#)

And from Natural New Age Mum:

- [Lemon Yoghurt Cake](#)

We use it for coffee too.

Anytime a recipe calls for sugar I usually halve the amount (seriously - always so much sugar!) and replace with rapadura or coconut sugar, which I find is very similar in texture and result but not as widely available (and usually more expensive).