



Taken from: www.nutrition-and-you.com/cashew_nut.html

Delicately sweet yet crunchy and delicious cashew nut is packed with energy, antioxidants, minerals and vitamins that are essential for robust health. Cashew, or “caju” in Portuguese, is one of the popular ingredients in sweet as well savory dishes worldwide.

Health Benefits

- Cashews are high in calories. 100 g of nuts provide 553 calories. They are packed with soluble dietary fiber, vitamins, minerals and numerous health-promoting phyto-chemicals that help protect from diseases and cancers.
- They are rich in “heart-friendly” monounsaturated-fatty acids like *oleic*, and *palmitoleic acids*. These essential fatty acids help lower harmful LDL-cholesterol while increasing good HDL cholesterol in the blood. Research studies suggest that Mediterranean diet which is rich in monounsaturated fatty acids help to prevent coronary artery disease and strokes by favoring healthy blood lipid profile.
- Cashew nuts are abundant sources of essential minerals. Minerals, especially manganese, potassium, copper, iron, magnesium, zinc, and selenium are concentrated in these nuts. A handful of cashew nuts a day in the diet would provide enough of these minerals and may help prevent deficiency diseases. Selenium is an important micronutrient, which functions as a co-factor for antioxidant enzymes such as *Glutathione peroxidases*, one of the most powerful antioxidants in the body. Copper is a cofactor for many vital enzymes, including cytochrome c-oxidase and superoxide dismutase (other minerals function as co-factors for this



Healthy Foods

Health Benefits: Cashews

enzyme are manganese and zinc). Zinc is a co-factor for many enzymes that regulate *growth and development, gonadal function, digestion, and DNA (nucleic acid) synthesis*.

- Cashews are also good in many essential vitamins such as pantothenic acid (vitamin B5), pyridoxine (vitamin B-6), riboflavin, and thiamin (vitamin B-1). 100 g nuts provide 0.147 mg or 32% of daily-recommended levels of pyridoxine. Pyridoxine reduces the risk of homocystinuria, and sideroblastic anemia. Niacin helps prevent "pellagra" or dermatitis. Additionally, these vitamins are essential for metabolism of protein, fat, and carbohydrates at the cellular level.
- Further, the nuts are also hold a small amount of zeaxanthin, an important pigment flavonoid antioxidant, which selectively absorbed into the retinal macula lutea in the eyes. It is thought to provide antioxidant and protective UV ray filtering functions and helps prevent age-related macular degeneration (ARMD) in the elderly.