

Chia is often found growing on sunny hillsides, disturbed fields, prairies, and plains throughout the West and often after fires. This member of the sage family (*Salvia columbariae*) is very aromatic and worth growing. Chia will grow anywhere from 6- 24 inches tall and will have as many as 5 flower heads per stalk. The leaves are opposite, mostly basal and up to 4 inches long.

Seeds of this plant and the related species, *S. mexicana*, were an important food to the Indians and early settlers. These seeds are not only nutritious but easily digested. Some Indian tribes believed that a tablespoon of chia seed would give a warrior enough energy to go on a 24-hour forced march. When moistened, the seeds become mucilaginous and can be used to calm an upset stomach or made into poultices for topical wounds. If placed under the eyelid before retiring, this will help clean dirt from the eyes.

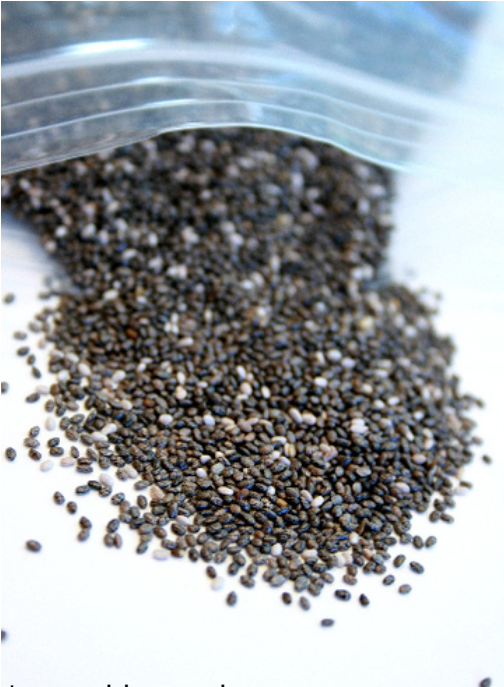
I think [chia seeds](#) are one of the most nutritious foods known to man, and besides providing an enormous amount of energy, they are high in protein, Omega-3 fatty acids, fiber and calcium.

These seeds are a good option for a child or adolescent, the pregnant women, vegetarian, or athletes and weight lifters who need that extra protein in their diet.

So what to do with all these Chia seeds you wonder? Well, Chia can be eaten raw, sprouted, roasted, or ground as a mush or as flour for bread. I mix them into meat loaf, breads and smoothies. One of my favorite ways to use them though is as a popular drink in Mexico called Agua de chia or Chia Seed Water. Here a great recipe to try at home.

Agua de Chia

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1 cup chia seeds, water, lemon juice, to taste, and a dash of salt. Consistently, the chia seeds and water form a gel-like substance that is rich in fiber and omega-3 fatty acids. This gel can help with digestion and provide a feeling of fullness. The lemon juice adds a tangy flavor, and the salt enhances the overall taste. This simple recipe is a great way to incorporate chia seeds into your diet.