



## Chia Seeds

### What is Chia?

Chia is an herbaceous plant, native to southern Mexico.<sup>1</sup> It has been part of the human diet for thousands of years and was an important crop amongst pre-Columbian Mesoamerican societies, where the seeds were used for food, medicine and oil.<sup>2</sup>



Chia's scientific name is *Salvia hispanica* L.; the name 'Salvia' stems from the Latin word *Salvare*, meaning 'the healer'.<sup>3</sup> Thought to play a prominent role in religious ceremonies, chia's value almost led to its destruction as Spanish settlers sought to eliminate all elements of indigenous culture.<sup>4,5</sup> Fortunately, a few of the hardy crops survived and in the 1990s the chia revival began.<sup>5</sup>

### Processing

Naturya Chia Seeds are grown across 30 farms in South America, with production platforms in Ecuador, Bolivia, Paraguay and Argentina. This diversity ensures the product is available regardless of any localised climatic issues. The production process is standardised to provide a consistently high quality product. The farms are carefully inspected and support is provided for the farmers, with training, harvesting and sales assistance.<sup>5</sup>

The chia plants are harvested between November and January. Chia seeds are easily removed from the plant so after harvesting the crop is already 96% pure seed. The seeds are then passed through a vibration cleaning mechanism and over magnets to ensure their purity.<sup>5</sup>



If the seeds are damp after harvesting they are dried out on a cloth hung about a metre above the ground, under which warm air is passed. Naturya Chia Seeds are regularly tested for contaminants to ensure that the final product is completely pure.<sup>5</sup>



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### How to enjoy Chia

Although we have been told by a number of customers that they enjoy chia in a trail mix, in gel form or as an added ingredient, the EU currently demands that any company selling chia seeds only market them as an additive for bread products with a maximum chia seed content of 5%. Whilst we may see the EU's stance as somewhat limiting, chia seeds certainly do make a fine addition to freshly baked loaves, tortillas or doughballs. Their dough-boosting benefits are endless!



As ever, feel free to experiment. If you come up with a great recipe then why not send it to us along with some pictures? The best recipes stand a chance of winning some free Naturya products and being uploaded to our site for everyone to try!

### The Science

Naturya Chia Seeds science information is currently being updated.

1. Monroy-Torres, R. et al, 2008. Protein Digestibility of Chia Seed *Salvia hispanica* L. Enero-Marzo. 9 [1].
2. Jamboonsri, W. et al, 2012. Extending the range of an ancient crop, *Salvia hispanica* L. – a new  $\omega$ 3 source. Genetic Resources and Crop Evolution. 59 [2].
3. Coorey, R., Grant, A. and Jayasena, A., 2012. Effects of Chia Flour Incorporation on the Nutritive Quality and Consumer Acceptance of Chips. *Journal of Food Research*. 1 [4].
4. Lee, S.L., 2009. The Effects of *Salvia hispanica* L. (*Salba*) on Postprandial Glycemia and Subjective Appetite. MSc. Nutritional Sciences, University of Toronto.
5. Supplier pers comms.



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