

# Ch-Ch-Ch- Chia Seeds

These incredible edible seeds can supercharge your health and heart.

**It's** a seed, it's a sprout, it's a super grain! Just three and a half ounces of chia contain the same amount of omega-3s as a 28-ounce filet of salmon and as much iron as five cups of raw spinach! Looks like there's more to chia than growing pets. Applauded by the ancient Aztecs for energy and endurance, the seeds, which come from the *Salvia hispanica* plant, were pegged "running food" because a single tablespoon is said to have sustained Aztec warriors for an entire day. "They are loaded with short-chain omega-3 fatty acids, which are known to reduce inflammation and help prevent risk factors associated with chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer and arthritis," says Christine Avanti, a Los Angeles-based nutritionist and author of *Skinny Chickies Don't Eat Salads* (Rodale, 2009). High in fiber and gluten free, the low-glycemic seeds contain calcium, copper, zinc, iron, phosphorous and potassium, plus they pack a protein and antioxidant punch. Kapow!

## Chia Fizz Serves 1

Sprinkled on cereal, salads and soups or added to baked goods, the nutty-tasting black and white seeds, which can also be sprouted and added to sandwiches and salads, are as nutritious as they are versatile. When soaked in water, chia seeds form a gel that adds substance and sass to smoothies, juices and drinks.

### INGREDIENTS:

- 12 fresh mint leaves
- ½ lime, left unpeeled and cut in thirds, divided
- 1 tsp light agave syrup
- 1 tbsp chia seeds
- 8 oz seltzer or natural sparkling water

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- ONE:** In a large glass, muddle mint leaves and 2 lime wedges with a muddler or back of a spoon.
- TWO:** Add agave, seeds and seltzer. Stir.
- THREE:** Chill in fridge for 10 minutes to allow chia seeds to gel.
- FOUR:** Garnish with remaining lime wedge, stir and serve.

Nutrients per 9- to 10-oz serving: Calories: 100, Total Fat: 4.5 g, Sat. Fat: 0 g, Omega-3s: 2,490 mg, Omega-6s: 820 mg, Carbs: 15 g, Fiber: 6 g, Sugars: 5 g, Protein: 2 g, Sodium: 0 mg, Cholesterol: 0 mg



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**RINGS IN AT:** Chia seeds don't come cheap, costing as much as \$12 per lb. Pricy but potent—a tablespoon goes a long way. If stored in a dry place, the seeds will keep for up to 2 years.

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**FIND IT:** Year round at health food stores and specialty supermarkets.

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**FUN FACT:** Hydration helpers, chia seeds can absorb more than 12 times their weight in water.

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**WEIGHS IN AT:** A fiber force to be reckoned with, a 1-oz serving packs 11 g of dietary fiber—that's almost half of the 25 g recommended per day for an adult female.

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**IT'S ALL RELATIVE:** *Salvia hispanica* is a member of the mint family.