

**PENNY SAVER NEWS**

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**Sugar By Any Name Has Just As Many Calories**

Is there really any advantage to using evaporated cane juice, brown sugar, turbinado sugar or molasses instead of white sugar? No - if you're talking calories. Yes - if you're concerned about flavor or color. So what are the difference?

Start with the simplest - evaporated cane juice. This is exactly what it says - the juice from sugar cane that had the water removed. All the sugar is there, along with any impurities, scorched sugars, a few minerals, etc. Some sugar got scorched by the heat of drying, so it turned dark. Some impurities might make it brown too. But do they have any nutritional advantage? No. And to get a significant amount of minerals from this you would have to eat many more pounds than would be good for your waist or weight.

Molasses is cane juice that has had some of the water and sugar removed. The cane juice is boiled until sugar crystals start to form. When the crystals are taken out, what's left is molasses. Light molasses is what's left if the juice is only boiled once. Because sugar crystals are removed molasses is not as sweet as sugar.

If the molasses is boiled again and more sugar crystals taken out the molasses becomes dark molasses. If it's boiled a third time what's left is blackstrap molasses. It is least sweet, and very dark and thick. Again, to get a significant amount of vitamins or minerals from any molasses you would have to eat an awful lot of it. But it does add a distinctive color and flavor to food.

The sugar crystals taken out of molasses are purified to remove any brown color.

This is table sugar, sucrose, a combination of glucose and fructose. Because it is so common today it is used as the standard for sweetness. Table sugar can also be made by purifying sugar beet extracts.

Brown sugar, both light and dark, are usually made by adding molasses back into white sugar. It's easier to get the same color and flavor by doing it that way than by trying to take a different amount of molasses or color out of every different batch of juice. Because of the molasses it is more moist and slightly sticky. To be measured accurately for a recipe you need to pack it firmly into the measuring cup.

Turbinado sugar is a light brown sugar. It is granulated but is not as sticky as our brown sugar. It tastes more like molasses. It's more popular in Britain and the Caribbean area. If you are used to using it in certain recipes, teas or other beverages, they just won't taste 'right' with our plain brown sugar. But there won't be any measurable difference in nutrition.

Castor sugar is another British or European style of sugar. It is most like what we sell here as Superfine sugar. Since the crystals are so tiny this kind of sugar dissolves very easily in liquids. It is used for tea, mixed drinks, and for making meringues.

Confectioner's sugar (or powdered sugar) is also very fine, but the crystals have been ground into a powder. To keep the powder from sticking together in a big lump cornstarch is added. This is fine for making cake frosting, but don't try to use powdered sugar for sweetening your tea. The cornstarch will make a gooey lump in the bottom of your glass.

High fructose corn syrup (HFCS) is a sweetener made from corn. Most of it has the same amount of fructose as table sugar does. There is evidence but no proof that

HFCS might work differently in our bodies. There is lots of evidence that we are eating a lot more of it than we used to, and more than is good for our weight.

The most important thing we can do for our health when it comes to sugar is to eat less of it. Read the labels on your foods. If any kind of sugar is at the top of the list of ingredients, just eat a little of it, or get something else instead.

Here's a Florida way to serve the Easter Ham, baked with grapefruit! It uses brown sugar, with a touch of Tabasco for some bite. Enjoy!

#### Baked Ham with Grapefruit

2 Florida grapefruit

3 Tbsp brown sugar

1 Tbsp catsup

1/8 tsp Tabasco sauce (or your favorite hot)

1 - 1 ½ to 2 pound ham slice

Cut grapefruit in half and free sections but leave them in the shell. Combine sugar, catsup and hot sauce into a smooth paste. Spread paste of cut side of grapefruit halves, and over ham slice. Arrange meat and grapefruit halves on shallow baking pan and bake at 350° F for 45 minutes. Serve one half grapefruit with each quarter of ham. Serves 4.