

## Is Salba the New Black?

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Alive Magazine – Salba is not really new. *Salvia hispanica* L. is a variety of an ancient plant species called Chia. The Aztecs used Chia as a staple in their diet, believing the seed possessed mystical energy and supernatural powers. Five hundred years later, salba is making a comeback. Chia plants produce seeds of two different colours: black and white. What makes salba “new” is the culmination of more than 15 years of white-seed breeding. By painstakingly sorting out the few white seeds produced from the mostly black-seed Chia plant, the resulting white-seed salba crop offers a substantially enhanced nutrient density compared to its Chia forbear.

In fact, salba is superior in protein quality to wheat, corn, rice, oats, barley, amaranth, and soy, and offers a disease-fighting arsenal of antioxidants (chlorogenic acid, caffeic acid, myricetin, quercetin, and flavonols). It is mineral rich (potassium, magnesium, calcium, folate, niacin, and copper) and hosts an abundance of omega-3, -6, and -9 essential fatty acids, with a perfect 4 to 1 omega-3 to -6 ratio.

In addition, salba has the highest fibre content of any food, including wheat bran. Salba can absorb 14 times its weight in water; its water-absorbing quality facilitates slower food digestion, decreasing blood sugar levels. The result is a feeling of fullness, which can assist in moderating appetite.

Even more compelling, salba is the only variety of *Salvia hispanica* L. that has undergone intensive clinical research. Various clinical studies, including diabetic specific, have been conducted by Dr. Vuksan, professor of endocrinology and nutritional sciences, Faculty of Medicine, St. Michael’s Hospital at the University of Toronto.

Salba provides protein and omega-3, -6, and -9 essential fatty acids without any aftertaste. Its neutral flavour allows for daily use as a supplement, and as a flour or egg substitute in baking and cooking. Ground or whole-seed salba can be easily incorporated into almost any food and may be added to yogurt, pudding, cereal, salads, burgers, and any hot or cold beverage.

Salba is gluten-free and makes an excellent substitute for flour (1 part ground salba replaces 3 parts flour). It can be used as an effective thickener for gravy, soups, or sauces and can replace eggs in any recipe. (Combining 2 Tbsp of ground salba and 1/2 cup of cold water can be used in place of one egg.)

Salba is produced in Peru’s pristine Amazon Basin, is non-GMO, and is farmed without use of chemicals or pesticides. Its proven health benefits as a functional whole food combined with its rich source of omega-3, -6 and -9, dietary fibre, antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, and high-quality vegetable protein makes salba the exciting “new” white seed to watch.