

Cactus water

Cactus water is produced by washing, cutting and boiling prickly pears and extracting the juice by pressing and filtering, meaning some nutrients will be lost.

Contains: the antioxidants taurine (amino acid), flavonoids and betalains that may improve the health of the skin, fight disease and promote better immune system health. There is also vitamin B1, B2, B3, B5 and B6 niacin, vitamins A and K, potassium, calcium, copper, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, selenium and zinc.

It may have anti-inflammatory effects and help to control blood pressure, and support the immune system, although fewer studies have been done on this water.

Maple water

Maple water is harvested like birch and is sterilized to remove unwanted organisms and to improve shelf life - destroying any probiotics and enzymes that are naturally occurring.

Contains: 100% maple water, polyphenols, antioxidants, prebiotics, electrolytes; calcium, potassium, manganese, magnesium and saponins that may help reduce cholesterol build up.

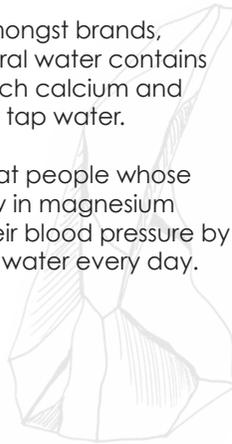
Whilst there is a lack of evidence, animal studies have shown maple water has potential to support the immune system and bone health, prevent gastric ulcers and lower blood pressure, it may also act as a prebiotic to support digestive health.

Mineral water

In the Pinewood Conservation in the Harrogate Springs area, mineral water is tapped and funnelled straight from the source directly into bottles without touching or altering it in anyway.

Nutrient levels vary amongst brands, but most bottled mineral water contains up to four times as much calcium and magnesium as regular tap water.

Studies have found that people whose drinking water was low in magnesium were able to lower their blood pressure by drinking 1ltr of mineral water every day.



The bottom line

These alternative waters offer some great nutrient and corresponding health profiles and are excellent hydrators of the body – some especially good after moderate exercise. However, it is their calories and processing, especially the aloe, that potentially lets them down.

All of them have environmental considerations that are worth exploring, if you want to choose the one that has the least impact. Watermelon water and cactus are less processed - mineral water is the least and is the cheapest. Cost will be a factor as well. Mineral water is the nutritionist's favourite, especially as it contains zero calories. If you struggle with the taste of plain water you could try one of Vacherin's fruity waters situated in the restaurant in a large jar that are free and without any added sugars.



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ALTERNATIVE WATERS

Each month our nutritionist **Gary Baverstock** provides some basic science and unbiased information, to help demystify certain popular foods in our diet.

ALTERNATIVE WATERS

- ◆ H₂O (water) is a polar inorganic compound that is, at room temperature, a tasteless and odourless liquid, nearly colourless with a hint of blue.
- ◆ This is by far the most studied chemical compound and is described as the "universal solvent" for its ability to dissolve many substances.
- ◆ This allows it to be the "solvent of life" - it is the only common substance to exist as a solid, liquid and gas in nature.
- ◆ Water is essential for life - the amount of drinking water required is variable, as it depends on physical activity, age, health issues and environmental conditions.
- ◆ It is estimated that the average person drinks about one litre of water a day with 95% drinking less than three litres per day.
- ◆ Water makes up about 60% of weight in men and 55% of weight in women.
- ◆ Infants are about 70% to 80% water while the elderly are around 45%.

Water alternatives

- ◆ Whilst plain water is clearly what you need to drink to stay hydrated some people find the taste too plain, something that you do become accustomed to.
- ◆ In response to this there has been a huge rise in plant waters over the past few years, such as birch, cactus, coconut, aloe, watermelon and maple that this leaflet highlights.

Nutritional values of selected waters

Water	Calories	Fat / Saturates	Total Carbs	Total Sugars	Protein	Salt
Vita Coco - natural coconut water	77cals	0.0g / 0.0g	4.5g	4.5g	0.1g	0.04g
Aloe water	38cals	0.0g / 0.0g	10.0g	10.0g	0.0g	0.04g
Birch water	20cals	0.1g / 0.0g	1.0g	1.0g	0.1g	0.0g
Watermelon water - cold pressed	25cals	0.0g / 0.0g	6.3g	5.06g	0.42g	0.0g
Cactus water	9cals	0.0g / 0.0g	2.2g	1.8g	0.1g	0.01g
Maple water	8cals	5.0g / 2.0g	2.0g	1.6g	0.0g	0.005g
Mineral water	0cals	0.0g / 0.0g	0.0g	0.0g	0.0g	0.0g

Based on the 100ml values of unsweetened and unflavoured varieties. Source: [google.com / harrosgatespring.com](http://google.com/harrosgatespring.com)

Benefits

Water is used for: digesting food, dissolving nutrients so that they can pass into your bloodstream, and move food along through your intestinal tract.

The transportation and use of nutrients to cells, such as minerals, vitamins and glucose.

The safe elimination of toxins and waste products out of your body.

Sending electrical messages between cells so that your muscles can move, your eyes can see, your brain can think, and so on.

Regulating body temperature - cooling your body with moisture (perspiration) on your skin.

Lubrication around joints and it also acts as a shock absorber for the eyes, brain and spinal cord.

Coconut water

Vita Coco coconuts are washed, cut open and flash-pasteurized for up to four seconds, which helps to sterilize the water, retaining its nutrients and flavour before adding it to tetra packs.

Contains: coconut water (99%), natural fruit sugar (1%), vitamin C and has the electrolytes: magnesium, potassium, sodium and calcium, making it a good 'after moderate exercise' source of hydration.

Animal studies have shown that coconut water may help with heart health, diabetes, prevent kidney stones and act as an antioxidant through the compounds it contains.



Aloe water

Aloe leaves are washed, split, ground and filtered to release the gel. Preservatives (sodium benzoate, 1%), pH stabilizing agents (ascorbic and citric acid) and potassium sorbate are added because of the increased nutrients and sugars to prevent mould and fungus growth.

Contains: 99.9% aloe vera, ascorbic acid, potassium sorbate – many brands have lots of added ingredients like sugars, stabilizers and flavourings.

Aloe has many health benefits that include supporting digestion, treating mouth ulcers, and helping with dental plaque, and may help with blood sugar regulation.



Birch water

Birch water is only harvested when the sap rises in a two-week period, when it is then pasteurized - destroying any natural probiotics and enzymes unique to the birch tree.

Contains: natural sugars (carbohydrates) namely xylitol, potassium, calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, manganese, zinc, sodium, iron, copper, most B vitamins and vitamin C.

Birch water may have anti-inflammatory effects, reducing LDL cholesterol, lowering blood pressure, immune support, having diuretic 'flushing' effects although there are fewer studies on this water.

Watermelon water

Watermelon water is produced by cold pressing - applying tremendous pressure exerted by a hydraulic press and by using a high-pressure process that protects the enzymes and nutrients, but eliminates the microorganisms.

Contains: excellent levels of vitamins A, B6 and C, potassium and at 92% water, it delivers needed fluids and nutrients to the body, including lycopene. It also has citrulline, which can help maintain blood flow within the heart and cardiovascular function and support exercise function.

It has been studied for its potential role in reducing the risk of heart disease, various cancers and protection to skin from harmful UV rays.

