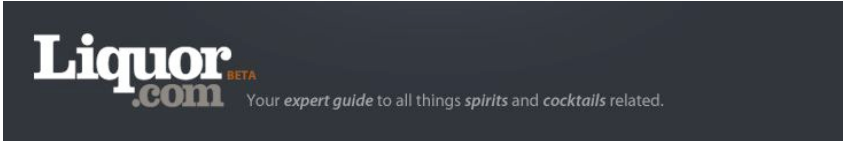




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## Cocktails Without the Sugar Rush

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There's a new bar staple cropping up across the land, and it arrives by way of tea, pancakes and yogurt: agave nectar. The sweet, golden syrup in a squeeze-bottle, familiar to anyone who has trolled the aisles of Whole Foods, is a lot like honey but it's subtler in taste and more fluid. Agave also has twice the sweetness of sugar with a lower glycemic index, so it's less likely to trigger a sugar rush—and subsequent crash.

The sweetener is made from the juice of the agave plant, which is also the source of tequila—fermented and distilled for tequila; filtered and heated for the nectar. (Just as with tequila, make sure that the nectar is made from 100 percent blue agave. Try ones made by [Wholesome Sweeteners](#) and [Partida Tequila](#).)

It's no surprise the two ingredients work together so well, and we don't just mean in [Margaritas](#). Vincenzo Marianella, head barman of Copa d'Oro in Santa Monica, California, mixes agave nectar with tequila, lemon juice and Chambord to create his popular [Rhode Island Red](#).

But agave nectar is actually quite versatile and is a good (lower calorie) substitute for simple syrup or triple sec in an array of cocktails, like the Sidecar, Cosmopolitan and [Mojito](#). To make it more mixable, Brian Van Flandern, former bartender at Per Se and Tequila Don Julio Global Brand Ambassador, advises adding an equal amount of warm water to the nectar. Since agave has a slight caramel flavor, it also works nicely with brown spirits and pairs well with apple and baking spices.

Once you try agave nectar, you'll wonder how you ever made cocktails without it.

*Joanne Chen is the author of [The Taste of Sweet: Our Complicated Love Affair with Our Favorite Treats](#).*



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