

# CHIA

(*Salvia hispanica*)



Ask if anyone is familiar with Chia. If so, how have they had it or how have they seen it being used? Pass around a jar of seeds to feel and observe.



We notice that the plant looks similar to our garden salvia and sage plants. They are related.

**Chia** ('strength' in Mayan) ('oily' in Nahuatl) was first recorded in Mayan pictographs 3,500 years ago.

**It is a superfood!**

Chia seeds contain large amounts of fiber and omega-3 fatty acids, plenty of high quality protein, and several essential minerals and vitamins.

The really cool thing about them is that the seeds can absorb up to 12 times their weight in liquid when soaked and develop a gooey coating that gives chia-based foods and drinks a gel texture.

Check out this cup of seeds I soaked in water for just a few hours...

**So the ancient Maya and Aztec long distance runners, who had to travel far to relay messages, could eat a small handful and drink water and stay hydrated and nourished for up to 24 hours during their long runs in the hot sun!**

(Does this make you think of a lesson from last Fall?)



'Why do you think a seed would have this ability to absorb and hold water? Think about the climate where it evolved....(Rain shadow desert of Chihuahua, Mexico)

**Chia seeds were eaten alone, mixed with other grains, ground into flour, used in drinks, and pressed for oil to be used as body and face paints.**

**Another use for chia was in religious ceremonies.**

**The Aztecs thought so much of chia that they offered the seeds to their gods as worship.**

**Because of this, the Spaniards outlawed the growing of chia in the 1500s.**

Today, the **Rarámuri (Tarahumara) Tribe** in Mexico, known for their long distance runners, still use chia this way.

They make a drink called **Iskiate** (IS-kee-ah-tay), **Agua Fresca** in Spanish, made of chia seeds mixed with lime juice and agave syrup from a cactus.



Here we talk about the name Raramuri, which is what they call themselves. ‘Tarahumara’ is a name given to them by outsiders. This is a common occurrence in tribal communities. And the history of the tribe:”Originally inhabitants of much of Chihuahua, the Rarámuri retreated to the high sierras and canyons such as the [Copper Canyon](#) in the [Sierra Madre Occidental](#) on the arrival of Spanish colonizers in the 16th century.”



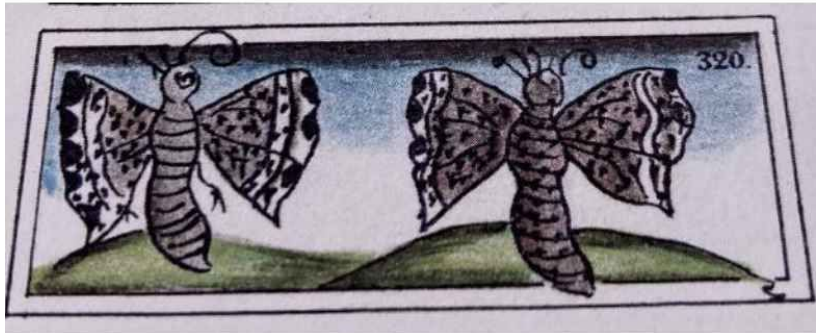
What do you notice about these runners? (possible answers: competition number, traditional dress, they are women...)



“The Tarahumara natives of the Copper Canyon in Mexico who are known to run hundreds of miles at a time, have worn these minimalist sandals for centuries, and exclusively use a version created from truck tire tread that lasts them up to 10 years in all kinds of weather and conditions. It's easy to see why. Huarache sandals allow the foot to splay and move naturally and so are very comfortable. The ingenious strap system allows for excellent adhesion to the foot and nearly infinite adjustment possibility.” (Earthrunners.com)



In ancient Mexico, there was a butterfly known as a “chia butterfly” (chia papalotl, in Nahuatl). Can you guess why?



[https://www.you](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)



Although this an ad for a product, it has good info and imagery...



“When I was growing up, this was all that I knew of Chia. Is it ok to use an ancient sacred food as a ‘toy’? What or why not?”

We are going to try a taste of Chia Pudding.

Made with coconut milk, chia seeds, maple syrup and vanilla.

