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### A Touch of Honey

October 15, 12:52 PM by Eric Burkett, Food and Drink Examiner 3 comments

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So, I'm sitting at the bar in the kitchen, listening to the news and eating a bowl of cereal. Post's Honey Bunches of Oats, to be specific. On the back of the box, a promo for the cereal reads "Crispy flakes... crunchy oat clusters... a touch of honey... that's why One Spoonful Is All It Takes"



A touch of honey, I like that. Then I take a gander at the ingredients: "Corn, whole grain wheat, sugar, whole grain rolled oats, brown sugar, high oleic vegetable oil (Canola or sunflower oil), rice flour, corn syrup, wheat flour, malted barley flour, salt, rice, fructose, whey (from milk), honey, malted corn and barley syrup, caramel color, artificial flavor, natural flavor, annatto extract (color)."

Seven of the 20 ingredients are either straight-up sweeteners or ingredients processed to enhance their sweetness such as the malted barley flour. I'm not picking on Post specifically. Also in my cupboard is a box of - I am not making this up - Nature's Path Organic Optimum Zen Cereal ("For Inner Harmony"). While it doesn't contain as many sweeteners as does the Honey Bunches of Oats, it does list organic evaporated cane juice as its second ingredient. Other sweeteners include organic molasses and barley malt extract, as well as organic oat syrup solids.

Bowl for bowl, Optimum Zen comes in at 13 grams of sugar versus Post's 6 grams. Keep in mind, too, that a bowl for measurement purposes is a completely unrealistic three quarters of a cup. Really. I would estimate that I probably ate at least two cups, meaning that I actually consumed 15 grams of sugars for breakfast. If I'd eaten Optimum Zen, I would have consumed more than 30 grams of sugar.

A touch of honey, indeed. <--[if supportLineBreakNewLine]-> <--[endif]->

**Confused about breakfast cereals?** You're in good company. Several web sites devote space to helping consumers navigate the cold cereal minefields. For some good side-by-side comparisons, see Diana Mirkin's [How to Pick a Breakfast Cereal](#), and Health Castle's [Healthy Breakfast Cereal Overview](#). E-Look let's you see the nutritional stats for many of the major cereal producers' brands before you even get to the store.

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**Annie:** That website Healthcastle.com you recommended about breakfast cereal is really good. thanks so much Eric!
October 16, 1:32 PM

**Amerkiwi:** Yeah- I have a hard time finding any cereal to eat that doesnt have corn syrup or a lot of sugar or a lot of sodium. I recently found a cookbook at a yard sale for a quarter "Recipes for a Small Planet". I remember hearing about this book years and years ago and never picked it up til now- fabulous cereal recipes inside I intend to make
October 15, 10:08 PM

**Andrea Spikes: Denver Food Examiner:** I agree! You may as well start a corn syrup IV and have that with your morning coffee. I'm a fan of Kashi Go Lean cereal - it's great with blueberries.
October 15, 1:16 PM

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Why is nothing ever simple? Especially, it seems, the simple things. A couple of days ago, I bought some Palestinian olive oil. I was in a small Arab grocery store looking for sumac when I noticed the bottle of Baladna brand oil amidst the containers... Read More

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October 7, 11:41 AM
Even a badly made fresh tortilla is better than the stuff that comes in those plastic bags. Trust me: I made several bad tortillas this morning. A few years ago, I had the opportunity to watch masa being ground at La Palma Mexicatessan, a store in San... Read More
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Topics: recipes , roasting , autumn , fall , root vegetables

**Ten Best Alternatives to the Food Network** 7 comments
October 1, 12:45 PM
Call me a curmudgeon, but the Food Network leaves me cold. While I would hesitate to describe it using terms such as vapid, precious, or blatantly commercial, I would suggest turning it off and getting back to basics. To help, I've assembled... Read More
Topics: Ten Best , Food Network

**Of limoncello, writing assignments, liquor licenses, and web sites.** 1 comment
September 30, 12:29 PM
I'm not much of a drinker. That's not to say I'm a tea-totaller, but I rarely drink more than a glass of wine or a beer in a week and I'll frequently go several weeks without touching anything alcoholic. Having said that, I did... Read More
Topics: Limoncello , web sites , Italy , lemons

Eric Burkett, who's been eating nearly all his life, is a professional chef and former journalist, cooking and writing in San Francisco.
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