

# Superfood chia seeds may be potential natural ingredient in food product development

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The consumer demand for natural, healthy and non-animal source food ingredients are on the rise. A new study from the *Journal of Food Science*, published by the Institute of Food Technologists (IFT), shows that chia seeds when placed in water produce a gel that could be potentially be applied in food product development.

The results of the study indicate that chia gel can be easily extracted and have great potential in food product development as a thickener and emulsifier, as well as a stabilizer in frozen foods.

Chia is one of the oldest crops cultivated for centuries by the Aztec tribes in Mexico and is high in dietary fiber, protein, and Omega-3 fatty acids. It also has the highest  $\alpha$ -linoleic acid (an Omega-3 fatty acid) content of any known vegetable source.

The researchers found that chia gel has good water binding capacity and oil holding capacity, viscosity, emulsion activity and freeze-thaw ability that is comparable to guar gum and gelatine, two common current [food ingredients](#) used in baked goods and sauces.

**More information:** Coorey, R., Tjoe, A. and Jayasena, V. (2014), "Gelling Properties of Chia Seed and Flour." *Journal of Food Science*, 79: E859–E866. doi: 10.1111/1750-3841.12444

Provided by Institute of Food Technologists

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