

# Why almond milk is basically a scam



RYAN GORMAN  
APR. 17, 2015, 9:35 AM



*Flickr/ Mike Mozart*

People drink almond milk for a variety of reasons, but many have no idea how devoid of nutrients their trendy dairy milk alternative actually is.

Each half-gallon carton contains very few actual almonds. Evidence shows there may be just over a handful.

While the amount of almonds in each brand of the beverage vary, an analysis of UK almond milk brand [Alpro](#) showed that nuts make up just 2% of the drink.

Business Insider was told by spokesperson Carissa Sauer of the trade group [Almond Board of California](#) that "ingredient combinations are pretty similar" between UK and US almond milk products. This leaves almond milk largely empty of the most beneficial part of almonds — protein.

Multiple almond growers and processors contacted by Business Insider declined to provide specifics on the ratio of almonds to other ingredients in their almond milk, outside of saying the recipe is fairly standardized "across the board."

The producers referred me to the Almond Board of California (ABC), which was willing to speak but referred me back to the almond companies.

A simple comparison of nutritional values in single servings of almonds and almond milk provides some insight, however:

A typical serving of almonds has 160 calories per serving. By comparison, a cup of almond milk contains

just about 30 calories. And while a serving of almonds has 14 grams of total fat and 6 grams of protein, a serving of the milk has 2.5 grams of fat and just one gram of protein.

In other words, a single serving of almond milk has almost no protein. Compared with plain old almonds, it fares even worse.

There is one place where almond milk comes out on top, of course: It has more potassium and more of the vitamins A and D. But almond milk is fortified with these nutrients — they've been added during the production process.

Based on these numbers, to get the nutritional value of a handful of almonds, you'd have to drink not just a few cups of the almond milk but an entire carton of it. I don't know too many people who drink almond milk a carton at a time.

Online recipes for making your own almond milk call for about one cup of almonds per half gallon, but ABC CEO Richard Waycott said that recipes vary widely and that mass-produced brands can be significantly more watered-down than homemade or artisanal varieties. Some people use almond milk in baking or cooking, where it can be useful for those looking to cut calories and fat. Others drink it because they are lactose intolerant, object to dairy milk on moral grounds, prefer the taste or think it's healthier.

Regarding the latter, the evidence does not suggest that is the case. If almond milk closely resembles any beverage, it's a glass of water and a multivitamin.