

# Brussels greenlights natural Latin American sweetener

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Brussels gave its green light Monday to the use of the age-old natural South American sweetener, stevia, in foods and drinks across the European Union.

The European Commission said it gave approval of the natural sweetener for use in the [food industry](#) from December 2 on the recommendation of the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA).

Stevia rebaudiana, sometimes known as sweatleaf or sugarleaf, is part of the sunflower family. Its steviol glycoside extracts can be far sweeter than sugar, making it attractive for low-carbohydrate, low-sugar foods.

Stevia is widely used in Asia and South America.

The director of the International Stevia Council welcomed the decision saying that "as a result, consumers across Europe will be able to enjoy products sweetened by steviol [glycosides](#)."

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