

Yellow, the Color of Fear



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There's a new color in the sugar bowl, yellow, the color of fear. Growing up I remember playing with those familiar little white packets of sugar at the restaurant table. I would fan them out, admiring the artfully drawn but poorly registered pictures of the Space Needle and other local Seattle attractions. Soon, little pink packets came to join the regular sugar packets in the bowl. Sweet and feminine, the bubblegum hue was cheerful and inviting but left a too sweet, metallic flavor in my mouth. With childish wisdom I stuck with the white, time honored sugar crystals.

Eventually a new color came to join the collection, baby blue—the color of truth, stability and trust. It became a standard among the packets and even stole my attention away from ordinary white sugar for a while. The blue promised a low calorie, no-carb solution to my sweet tooth dilemma and I trusted its authority “true blue” until I began hearing about links to brain damage. So, I decided to make the switch to the little brown raw sugar option that had joined the others in the color line up. Natural brown, unbleached and earthy, raw sugar garnered more trust than the pastel blue of days gone by. Taking the shortest trip from nature to my coffee cup I was willing to wait for the chunky granules to dissolve, knowing I was living closer to the source.

Having recently returned from Europe where we have the pink, blue and white packets along with giant amber-like loose crystals to choose from for our coffee, I was surprised to see a new addition to the sweetener lineup. A frothy new yellow hue adds dimension to the previous sweet choices, creating a rainbow multiplicity of options. Touting its origins as deriving from Sugar, yellow promises a safer alternative to pastel pink carcinogens and baby blue brain tumors. Realizing that health concerns motivate the move from sugar to substitute, whether for Diabetes or Atkins Diets, I am glad there is a healthier solution on the market. Still, it seems odd to add

yet another option to the pastel palette—each chemical compound slowly inching closer to safety, 10 years at a time. How long before we learn of secret side effects with this one? Yellow has me running scared—all the way back to my basic brown wrappers and slow dissolve sweet sludge at the bottom of my coffee cup. I'll stick with the earthy brown packets, thanks, having learned not to trust pretty pastel compounds formulated in a lab. Besides, a little dirt never hurt anybody.