



Taste Test: Virgil's stevia-sweetened Diet Cola

Growing up in the late eighties and early nineties, diet soda was The Thing. As pre-teens and then teenagers, we drank it like it was water, swapping cans of Diet Orange Crush and Diet Muggs Root Beer in an attempt to quench our sugar cravings and keep the weight off. In college, I drank it for the caffeine, when I couldn't stand another cup of mediocre cafeteria coffee.

After college, my soda habit slowly died off as I switched to water, tea and coffee (I've yet to kick that caffeine habit). I'd occasionally have a diet soda, but as the news reports about the dangers of artificial sweeteners flooded media outlets, I tried to stay away.

Virgil's the maker of micro-brewed root beer, cream soda and other classic soda combinations, has recently released a line of small batch Diet Real Cola that uses stevia as the sweetener in place of more common ones like Splenda or NutraSweet. Stevia is an herb that is native to Mexico and South and Central America. There has been some controversy over the safety of stevia, but unlike other sugar substitutes, it has never been found to cause cancer in test animals.

When I opened that first bottle of Virgil's Diet Real Cola, the first thing I noticed is that it doesn't have the metallic scent that comes with just about every other cola on the market. Instead, it smells sweet and a little spicy. As I tasted my initial sip, I noticed that it wasn't as aggressively sweet as traditional sodas. As I kept drinking, my taste buds adjusted and I started to really enjoy the flavor and fizziness of the soda. As I finished the bottle, I was already looking forward to the next.

For those of you who are attached to your Diet Coke, this soda is probably going to taste strange and unwelcome to you. However, I think that this flavor will really speak to the people who want to indulge in a bit of soda on occasion but who don't want all the sugar and caffeine. For you folks, I highly recommend it.



Virgil's

