

## What is “Brix”

Professor A. F. W. Brix was a 19th Century German chemist. He was the first to measure the density of plant juices by floating a hydrometer in them.

1. BRIX is a measure of the percent solids (TSS) in a given weight of plant juice.
2. BRIX is often expressed another way: BRIX equals the pounds of sucrose, fructose, vitamins, minerals, amino acids, proteins, and other solids in one hundred pounds of a particular plant juice.
3. BRIX varies directly with plant QUALITY. For instance, a poor, sour tasting grape from worn out land can test 8 or less BRIX. A full flavored, delicious grape, grown on rich, fertile soil can test 24 or better BRIX. Similarly, the tasteless, almost bitter cantaloupe from the salad bar cannot be compared to the 18 Brix delight coming from the well-tended garden. All fruits & vegetables are subject to the same laws.

Please remember that sugar is only one of the components of Brix. Also understand that many substances can give “false” Brix readings. For instance, try rubbing alcohol, whiskey, vinegar, or wine. Cooking oil, molasses, syrup, and other thick liquids require a refractometer calibrated to read 30-90 Brix. Honey is checked with a refractometer calibrated to measure the water within it instead of the solids in the water. NO---a thousand times no---Brix is not sugar! You can prove it to yourself by, say, putting a teaspoon of sugar in some ordinary orange juice. It will NOT taste better.

### **If it isn't BRIX - it's water**

BRIX is a technical measurement used by food processors to describe the quantity of solids contained in water. In simple terms, everything that is not water is BRIX. The majority of the food industry does not consider a sugar/water solution of less than 58 BRIX (58% solids and 42% water) to be a true syrup. The "BRIX wall" separates true concentrated syrups from inferior, watered-down products.

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