

Millets
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**Nutritional
Source**



Introduction

- Millets are small-seeded grasses that are hardy and grow well in dry zones as rain-fed crops, under marginal conditions of soil fertility and moisture.
- Millets are one of the oldest foods known to humans and possibly the first cereal grain to be used for domestic purposes.
- Millets are also unique due to their short growing season. They can develop from planted seeds to mature, ready to harvest plants in as little as 65 days.

History of Millets : There is evidence of the cultivation of millet in the Korean Peninsula dating to the Middle Jeulmun Pottery Period (around 3,500-2,000BC). In India, millets have been mentioned in some of the oldest Yajurveda texts, identifying foxtail millet (priyangava), Barnyard millet (aanava) and black finger millet (shyaamaka), thus indicating that millet consumption was very common, pre-dating to the Indian Bronze Age (4,500BC).

Even until 50 years ago, millets was the major grain grown in India. From a staple food and integral part of local food cultures, just like many other things, millets have come to be looked down upon by modern urban consumers as "coarse grains" - something that their village ancestors may have lived on, but that they had left behind and exchanged for a more "refined" diet.

Downfall of Millets : Following the western model of development, India and other developing nations have lost out on a lot of useful and meaningful things. Food habits have been one of the biggest changes. We have forgotten our indigenous foods and chasing standardisation. Millets too have been discarded as being too primitive to be used, forgetting the roots.

Why Millets are Unique? - Unlike rice and wheat that require many inputs in terms of soil fertility and water, millets grow well in dry regions as rainfed crops. By eating millets, we will be encouraging farmers in dryland areas to grow crops that are best suited for those regions. This is a step towards sustainable cropping practices where by introducing diversity in our diets, we respect the biodiversity in nature rather than forcefully changing cropping patterns to grow wheat and rice everywhere.

Types of Millets & Their Regional Names

English	Pearl Millet	Finger Millet	Foxtail Millet	Kodo Mil-let	Little Millet	Barnyard Millet	Sorghum
Hindi	Bajra	Nachani, Mundua, Mandika, Marwah	Kangni, Kakum, Rala	Koden, Kodra	Kutki, Shavan	Jhangora, Sanwa	Jowar
Tamil	Kambu	Kezhvaragu, Kelvaragu, Keppai, Ragi	Thinai	Varagu	Saamai	Kuthiravali (Kuthi-raivolly)	Cholam
Telugu	Sajjalu	Ragula, RagiChodi	Korra	Arikelu, Arika	Sama, Samalu	Udalu, Kodisama	Jonna
Kannada	Sajje	Ragi	Navane	Harka	Saame, Save	Oodalu	Jola
Malayalam	Kambam	PanjiPullu	Thina	Koovaragu	Chama	Kavadapullu	Cholam
Marathi	Bajri	Nagli, Nachni	Kang, Rala	Kodra	Sava, Halvi, Vari	-	Jowari, Jondhala
Punjabi	Bajra	Mandhuka, Mandhal	Kangni	Kodra	Swank	Swank	Jowar
Gujarati	Bajri	Nagli, Bavto	Kang	Kodra	Gajro, Kuri	-	Jowari, Juar
Bengali	Bajra	Marwa	Kaon	Kodo	Sama	Shyama	Jowar
Oriya	Bajra	Mandia	Kanghu, Kan-gam, Kora	Kodua	Suan	Khira	Juara

Type of Millet	Protein(g)	Fat (g)	Fiber (g)	Minerals (g)	Iron (mg)	Calcium (mg)	Calories (kcal)
Pearl Millet	10.6	4.8	1.3	2.3	16.9	38	378
Finger Millet	7.3	1.5	3.6	2.7	3.9	344	336
Foxtail Millet	12.3	4	8	3.3	2.8	31	473
Kodo Millet	8.3	3.6	9	2.6	0.5	27	309
Little Millet	7.7	5.2	7.6	1.5	9.3	17	207
Barnyard Millet	11.2	3.9	10.1	4.4	15.2	11	342
Sorghum	10.4	3.1	2	1.6	5.4	25	329
Proso Millet	12.5	2.9	2.2	1.9	0.8	14	356

Health Benefits of Millets

- ♥ May protect against heart diseases
- ♥ Helps to reduce cholesterol levels
- ♥ May be beneficial for detoxifying the body
- ♥ Helps to prevent type 2 diabetes
- ♥ May postpone the onset of breast cancer
- ♥ Helps to reduce hypertension
- ♥ Helps to optimize kidney & liver function and improves immune system



Future of Millets

- Today, a lot of efforts are being put to increase the demand of millets in India and in the world, including changing the mindset of the people.
- Many organisations are coming up in support of this cause.
- Efforts are being taken to educate farmers about better millets growing techniques.
- A lot of importance is given to them because of their non gluten tendency.
- Many recipes with millets as the base have been floating around too.

Conclusion

- Millets is really an umbrella term for around 20 species of cereal grass from the Poaceae family.
- Due to its high resistance to harsh conditions, millets can be grown even in harsh environment& helps farmers to grow it and provides economical and high nutrient options for all.
- At room temperature, millet can be stored in a sealed, dry container for 10 - 12 years.
- Nearly 40% of the food produced in India is wasted every year. Millets don't get destroyed easily and some of the millets are good for consumption even after 10-12 years of growing, thus providing food security and keeping a check as food wastage.
- In a broad sense millets are pest free crops.