

Why Should We Eat Millets

Soumitra Tiwari¹,
Aakriti Singh Sisodiya^{2*}

¹Assistant Professor,
²Guest Faculty
Atal Bihari Vajpayee University,
Bilaspur



*Corresponding Author
Aakriti Singh Sisodiya*

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INTRODUCTION

The practice of consuming millets as part of the daily diet is not new to India. “Millets had been the major staple food in central India, southern India and hilly regions of Uttarakhand for centuries till the time of the Green Revolution. After the advent of high-yielding varieties of rice and wheat during the 1970s, millets got sidelined from our food basket. The reason for this is lack of awareness about the nutritional benefits, the not-so-sumptuous taste and the tag of “a poor man’s food”. “Also, government pushed only rice and wheat in the subsidized public distribution system, rendering the cultivation of millets uneconomical.

Consequently, this resulted in high consumption of polished rice and refined wheat flour, which happen to be the main ingredients of foods consumed by the urban population. This trend, coupled with sedentary lifestyles, has led to a rise in obesity and other lifestyle diseases like diabetes, hypertension and heart disease, across age groups.



Globally, it found that over two billion children and adults suffer from health problems related to being overweight or obese. In such a scenario, gluten-free millets could prove to be an effective weapon.

People can prepare millet in many different ways. It can be soft and smooth, like a porridge, or light, fluffy, and slightly chewy, like rice.

The following are summaries of popular sweet and savory recipes for millet:

- **Toasted millet tabouli:** Toast grains in a sauté pan until light golden brown. Cook with water or stock. Fluff with a fork. Add diced tomato, cucumber, onion, chopped fresh mint, oregano, and parsley. Mix with olive oil and season.
- **Super simple millet pilaf:** Add millet and toast it until it is golden and gives

off a nutty aroma. Cook grains with chopped carrots, and onion. Add sea salt and water to the pan. Bring the millet to a boil, cover, and reduce the heat to a simmer. Cook the pilaf for 30 minutes and let it stand.

- **Polenta-style millet:** Mix millet and broth. The millet is done when the water has fully absorbed. Preparing millet with more water gives it a consistency like porridge for breakfast as a substitute for oatmeal. People can then cool, slice, and sauté the millet like polenta.
- **Millet muffins:** A person can also combine millet with flour, baking powder, baking soda, eggs, milk, vanilla extract, butter, and brown sugar to make muffins.