



MILLET

Ingredient of the Month



Presented by ACFEF Chef & Child Foundation

Millet refers to a group of small-seeded cereal crops grown around the world for food and fodder. It is an ancient grain with origins in East Asia and Africa. It is considered a staple food in many parts of the world and is gaining popularity in the United States because it is gluten-free and has high nutrition values. Millet is fast-growing and doesn't need much rain, making it an ideal crop.

Millet is a small, round seed varying in color from pale yellow to purple to gray. It has a slightly nutty flavor with a crunchy texture that is similar to brown rice. Millet is an affordable and versatile grain that lends itself well as the background to

other seasonings and can be served sweet or savory. It can be served for breakfast, lunch or dinner, and can be used whole or ground into flour or flakes.

Millet is a nutrient-rich grain packed with vitamins and minerals for optimal health. It supports bone health by providing the body with manganese, phosphorus and copper. It is a good plant-based source of protein, which is essential for building and maintaining bones, muscles, cartilage, skin and blood. Millet is high in dietary fiber, which helps control weight and prevents constipation. It is gluten-free and retains its alkaline properties after being cooked, making it easier to digest.

Healthy Ingredient Contribution

Values from NutritionData.com based on millet, cooked, 1 cup (170 grams).

MANGANESE: One serving of millet provides 24 percent of the daily recommended value of manganese. This macromineral is essential for proper growth of bone structure and plays an important role in metabolic activity in the body.

MAGNESIUM: Millet contains 19 percent of the daily recommended value of magnesium, which is used in many necessary body functions, such as making proteins, regulating temperature, building bones and releasing energy from muscle storage.

PHOSPHORUS: One serving of millet supplies 17 percent of the daily recommended value of phosphorus, a mineral needed primarily in forming healthy bones. It plays an important role in how the body stores and uses energy and helps reduce muscle pain.

COPPER: Millet provides 14 percent of the daily recommended value of copper, a mineral that helps produce energy in cells, builds strong tissue and supports iron absorption.

DIETARY FIBER: Cabbage provides 12 percent of the daily recommended value of dietary fiber. Soluble fibers help control weight by making the stomach feel full, and insoluble fibers add bulk to the diet and help prevent constipation.

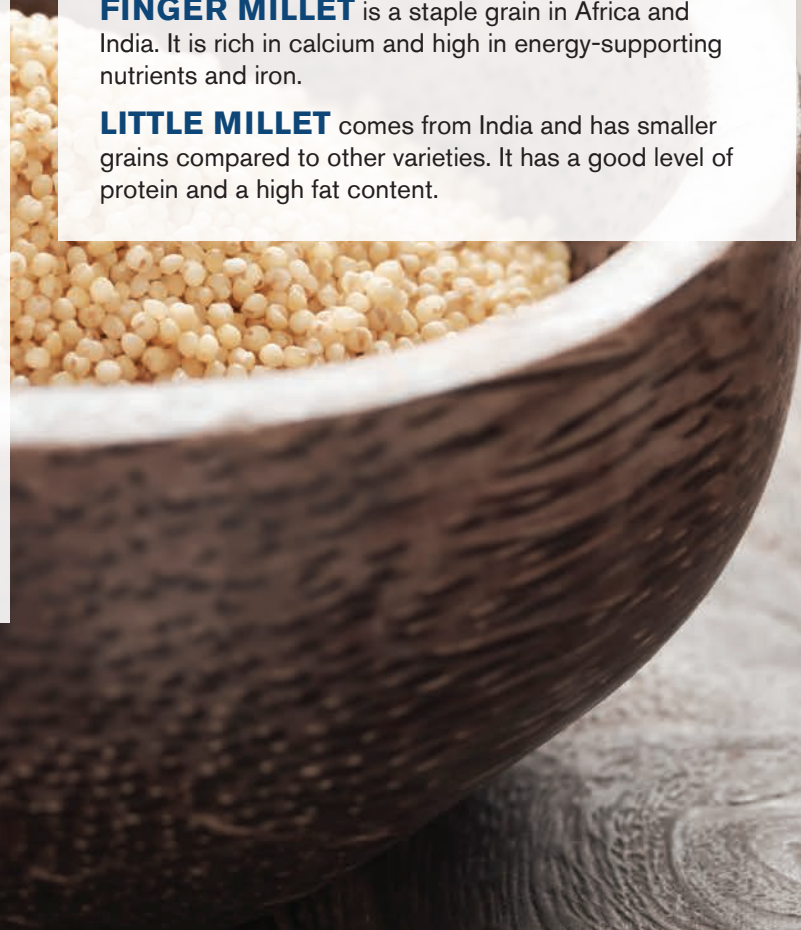
Types and Varieties

PEARL MILLET is the most commonly consumed variety and originated in Africa. The grains are larger than other millet varieties and come in various colors including pale yellow, brown, grey, slate and purple. It is very high in protein and energy-supporting nutrients.

FOXTAIL MILLET is the second most produced variety and is a staple grain in East Asia. It has the highest mineral content compared to other varieties and is rich in protein.

FINGER MILLET is a staple grain in Africa and India. It is rich in calcium and high in energy-supporting nutrients and iron.

LITTLE MILLET comes from India and has smaller grains compared to other varieties. It has a good level of protein and a high fat content.



Selecting and Storing

- Millet is commonly found prepackaged as whole, hulled seeds, or ground as flour or flakes. Before using, make sure the grain doesn't smell stale or musty.
- Uncooked millet can be stored in an airtight container for up to two months in a cool, dry place; four months in the refrigerator; and tightly wrapped in the freezer for up to six months.
- Cooked millet keeps for up to two days in the refrigerator; it does not freeze well.

Culinary Uses

- Before cooking, rinse in cold water and soak for a couple hours to remove any impurities and for better digestibility.
- Boil for 10-20 minutes, steam for 15-30 minutes, or bake for 45 minutes at 350 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Replace or add to mashed potatoes by blending cooked millet into a creamy mixture.
- Use millet flour to make flat breads, or combine with up to 25 percent wheat flour for yeast breads.
- Prepare a hearty bowl of millet porridge with nuts and fruit, or sprinkle raw, hulled seeds over yogurt for a healthy crunch.
- Serve as a pilaf or stuffing, or as an addition to soups and stews. Boil with apples and add honey when cooled for a sweet treat.
- Pop like popcorn for a nutritious snack. Pour a small amount of millet into a dry frying pan and turn the stove on a low-to-medium setting. Stir occasionally and watch as the millet begins to pop after about five minutes.

Interesting Facts

- Millet is grown in the United States primarily for animal fodder, pasture grass and birdseed.
- Food anthropologists believe that millet was the first cereal plant domesticated by humans.
- Millet grains were found entombed with Egyptian pharaohs.
- Millet is often used as filler for bean bags.
- During the Middle Ages, millet was the main grain in Europe before potatoes and corn were introduced.



American Culinary Federation
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AMERICAN CULINARY FEDERATION
180 Center Place Way
St. Augustine, FL 32095
800.624.9458 | www.acfchefs.org