

Cooking with Millet

Cooked Millet: There are many cooking variations to be found for millet. A good general guideline is to use 3 parts water or stock and 1 part grain, add grain to boiling water, and simmer covered for approximately 30 minutes or until water is completely absorbed. Remove from heat and let steam, covered for ten minutes more. *The grain has a fluffier texture when less water is used and is very moist and dense when cooked with extra water.* If millet is presoaked the cooking time is shortened by 5 to 10 minutes.

Individual preferences can be addressed by experimenting with cooking times, methods, and liquid amounts. You may want to try this suggestion: Soak the grain overnight, heat water or other liquid in top of a double boiler, add millet and steam over boiling water for thirty minutes or until the millet is tender. The flavor of millet is enhanced by lightly roasting the grains in a dry pan before cooking; stir constantly for approximately three minutes or until a mild, nutty aroma is detected.

The grain mixes well with any seasoning or herbs that are commonly used in rice dishes and for interesting taste and texture variations it may be combined with quinoa and brown or basmati rice. Millet may also be sprouted for use in salads and sandwiches.

Millet flour produces light, dry, delicate baked goods and a crust that is thin and buttery smooth. For yeast breads up to 30% millet flour may be utilized, but it must be combined with glutinous flours to enable the bread to rise. For a delightful "crunch" in baked goods, the millet seeds may be added whole and raw before baking.

Storage: Properly stored, whole millet can be kept safely for up to two years. The grain should be stored in tightly closed containers, preferably glass, in a cool dry place with a temperature of less than 70° or in the refrigerator. The flour deteriorates and becomes rancid very rapidly after it is ground, so it is best to grind the flour right before it is to be used.

Black Bean and Millet Salad

1 cup millet, uncooked
3 cups water
2 cups black beans, cooked
2 large tomatoes, chopped
1 medium onion, (or substitute green onions), chopped
1 medium cucumber

Dressing

1/3 cup water
3 Tablespoons lemon juice
1 Tablespoon balsamic vinegar
2 teaspoons garlic, minced
1 teaspoon sea salt
1/2 teaspoon allspice
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
1 teaspoon cumin

Cook the millet in 3 cups of water until water is absorbed, about 30 minutes. Fluff with fork and allow to cool. In a large bowl, combine millet, black beans, tomatoes, and onion.

Peel several strips from the cucumber (it should look striped) and cut it lengthwise into four pieces. Remove the seeds and cut into 1/2-inch slices. Add the cucumber to the salad.

Mix all dressing ingredients until well blended and pour over the salad, tossing to blend. (Experiment with the seasonings to suit taste.) Cover and refrigerate until the salad is well chilled. Serve on lettuce leaves or stuff into pita bread.

Millet Cornbread This is a wheat-free recipe but could still contain gluten.

1/2 cup Medium Grind Cornmeal
1/4 cup Millet Flour
1 cup Milk
3 large Egg Yolks
2 Tb Water
1 Tb Vegetable Oil
1/2 tsp Sea Salt
3 Egg Whites, stiffly beaten

Preheat oven to 325°. Grease well an 8" x 8" x 8" baking pan, set aside.

Combine the cornmeal and milk in a saucepan and cook over low heat, stirring constantly until the mixture thickens. Remove from heat and cool to lukewarm. Blend the egg yolks with the water, oil and sea salt. Add to this mixture the millet flour and then combine with cornmeal mush. Gently fold in the stiffly beaten egg whites and turn the batter into the prepared baking pan. Bake 40-45 minutes. Cut into 2" squares. Makes 16 squares.