

Millet Recipes for the Home Kitchen

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This NebGuide offers some simple yet popular recipes featuring proso millet as the main ingredient, sourced from around the world. Millet is an excellent substitute for other grains owing to its nutritional and environmental attributes. With the crop’s popularity gaining momentum recently, we expect the grain to grow out of its niche status in the upcoming years in the U.S.

Following Quinoa’s Journey

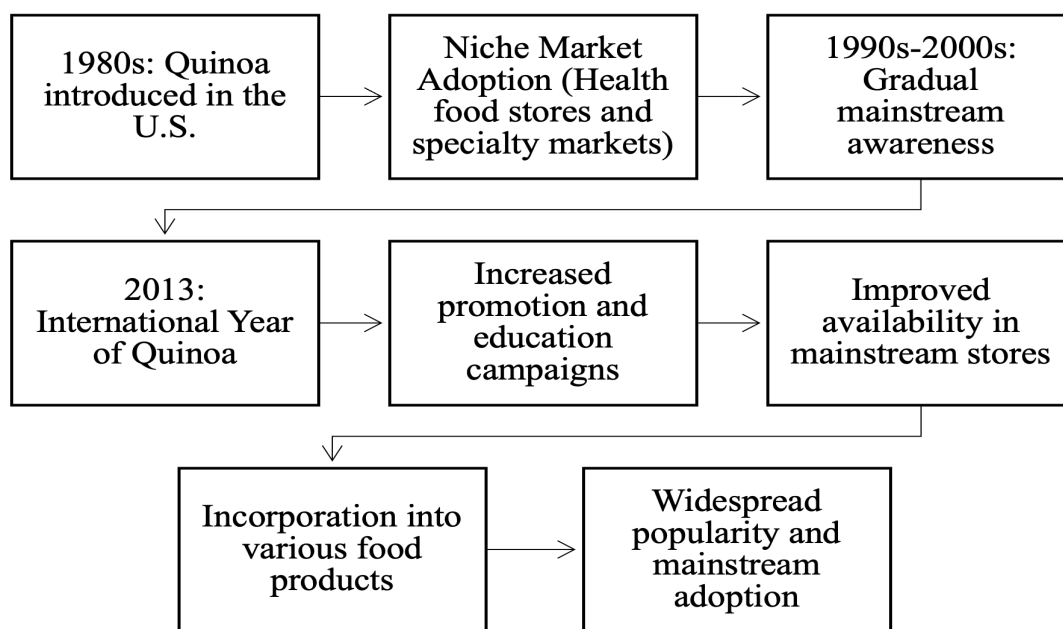


Fig. 1: A flowchart representing the path to quinoa’s popularity in the United States

The given flowchart illustrates how quinoa, a staple grain from the Andes, evolved from being largely unknown to a commonly consumed grain in the United States, especially after the International Year of Quinoa in 2013. When the United Nations declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets to raise awareness about the crops’ climate resili-

ence and nutritional benefits, it got us wondering if proso millet would have a similar journey to becoming a popular grain in the United States for human consumption. Millets, now being referred to as “supergrains”, have the potential to promote both sustainable agriculture and healthier diets, eventually addressing climate and food insecurity globally.

Proso Millet as Human Food in the U.S.

Traditionally grown in the U.S. High Plains, proso millet, commonly known as “millet”, started appearing in health food stores and specialty markets in the late 1990s. A staple in many Asian and African countries, in the U.S., it mostly appeals to a niche consumer base of those interested in alternative grains and gluten-free options. However, its adoption has been slower compared to other gluten-free grains, such as quinoa, primarily due to low consumer awareness and limited availability of proso millet in mainstream grocery stores. Millet has continued to maintain its niche product status in the human food market. Recent years have seen an increase in efforts to raise awareness about proso millet as a nutrient-dense alternative grain, especially since 2023. Packaged food and beverage products made from millet are becoming increasingly available in the U.S.

Why Eat Millet?

- Millet has higher protein than other common cereals such as rice, wheat, and corn. About 12% of its weight comes from protein, making it an excellent source of plant-based protein (11g per 100g uncooked grain), especially beneficial for vegans and vegetarians.
- A single serving of cooked millet provides around 10 grams of dietary fiber, which is crucial for digestive health, preventing constipation, and promoting feelings of fullness.
- Millet is naturally gluten-free, making it a safe and nutritious option for individuals with gluten intolerance or Celiac disease.
- Millet has a low glycemic index (50–65) and can help regulate blood sugar levels for individuals with diabetes or those seeking to manage their blood sugar levels.
- Millet is a good source of essential minerals such as magnesium, phosphorus, and iron, contributing to various bodily functions and overall health.
- Millet is a drought-resilient crop and has a lower carbon footprint than other common grains such as rice, wheat, or corn.
- Incorporating millet into our diet can promote a more balanced and sustainable food system by adding variety and diversity to our food choices.

Flavor and Texture Profile of Millet

Millet has a unique texture and flavor profile compared to other grains such as rice, wheat, and corn. It is closest in

flavor and texture to couscous—both are light grains with a mild, nutty flavor. However, while couscous is made from wheat, millet is 100% gluten-free, offering more protein and fiber.

Flavor:	Texture:
- Nuttier and sweeter than rice, which is bland	- Fluffier and lighter than quinoa
- More subtle flavor than strongly flavored buckwheat	- Less dense and toothsome than barley or farro
- Less bitter than amaranth or rye	- More bite than starchy rice or oats
- Not as tangy as other millet species like pearl or finger millet	- Similar mouthfeel to bulgur wheat and couscous

Because millet offers more texture than other grains and has its own distinctive, mild sweet nuttiness, it can be used as a versatile ingredient in a variety of meals. It serves as a neutral-flavored base, taking on the flavors of the herbs and seasonings it is cooked with, without losing its character or becoming overwhelmed. The next section of the article provides some proso millet recipes from around the world to demonstrate its use in the home kitchen for breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

Proso Millet Recipes

Organic Millet Linguine with Walnut & Purple Basil Pesto

(Source: Golden Prairie (<https://goldenprairie.com/recipe-directions/millet-linguine>))



Ingredients:

- One-pound organic hulled proso millet linguine
- 1 cup of organic broccoli
- 1 cup of organic spinach
- 1 cup of halved organic tomatoes (cherry or grape)
- 1 dozen stemmed pickled peperoncini (seeded & sliced)

Pesto:

- 2 cups packed purple or green basil leaves
- 1/3 cup toasted walnuts
- 1 clove garlic
- ½ tsp lemon zest & juice
- ½ lime zest & juice
- ½ cup grated parmesan
- 1/8 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/8 cup of canola oil
- ½ tsp sea salt

Preparation:

- Prepare the pesto by adding all the listed ingredients in a blender or food processor.
- In the meantime, cook pasta according to package instructions. Keep aside some pasta cooking water for later (~1/3 cup).
- Lightly steam or sauté the broccoli, spinach, and tomatoes.
- Toss pesto with cooked pasta and the reserved pasta cooking water so that pesto coats pasta. Fold in lightly steamed or sautéed veggies.
- Yields 8 servings.

The Golden Prairie website has additional millet recipes available at: <https://goldenprairie.com/recipes>

Millet Porridge

(Source: Cecilia Antoni, Germany)



Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup of hulled proso millet
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon, ground
- 1/2 tsp turmeric, ground
- A pinch of black pepper

- 1 tbsp nuts or sunflower seeds
- Seasonal fruits
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tbsp flaxseed oil
- Optional: honey or maple syrup

Preparation:

Rinse the millet and bring to a boil with twice the amount of water. Let simmer for about 5 minutes. Add cinnamon, turmeric, and a little black pepper to taste. In the meantime, roast the nuts and/or sunflower seeds in a pan without oil. Clean, peel, and cut the fruits into small pieces. Once the millet is cooked, add the roasted nuts/seeds, the fruits, the lemon juice, and the flaxseed oil. Sweeten to taste.

Millet polenta with miso and scallion oil

(Source: Bon Appétit: <https://bit.ly/2ISGgMV>)



Ingredients:

- ¾ cup hulled proso millet
- ½ cup grapeseed or other neutral oil
- 3 scallions, thinly sliced, plus more for serving
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- 2 medium leeks, thinly sliced (white and light-green parts only)
- 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 4 cups of vegetable broth
- 1 tablespoon + 1 teaspoon white miso
- Freshly ground black pepper

Preparation:

- Pulse the millet in a blender or food processor until about half of the grains are broken. Transfer the millet to a small bowl; set aside. Rinse out the blender.

- Heat grapeseed oil in a small saucepan over medium-high heat until hot. Add 3 sliced scallions and let sizzle just until green parts darken slightly, about 1 minute. Transfer to a blender and let cool. Purée until it is very smooth.
- Heat olive oil in a large saucepan over medium. Add leeks and garlic and cook, stirring often, until very soft, 8–10 minutes. Add broth and miso and whisk to combine. Bring to a simmer, whisk in the reserved millet, and season with salt. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally and adding more water by ¼ cupful to loosen if needed, until the mixture is thick and the grains are tender, 40–45 minutes. Taste and season with salt if needed.
- Divide millet polenta among bowls. Top with scallion oil, more chopped scallions, and black pepper.

Pumpkin millet porridge

(Source: Dr. Galina Suvorova, All-Russia Research Institute of Legumes and Groat Crops)



Ingredients:

- 1lb of pumpkin
- ¾ cup of hulled proso millet seeds
- 3 cups of milk
- ¼ cup of sugar
- ⅓ cup of raisins
- 2oz of butter
- Pinch of salt
- Water if needed

Preparation:

- Clean the pumpkin of seeds and skin, dice it into square pieces of half-inch size.

- Add sugar, milk, and butter to it.
- Add the millet and bring it to a simmer, cover the pot with a lid, and cook until the millet is soft.
- When porridge becomes soft, add raisins and serve hot.

Millet Patties

(Source: Dr. Meenakshi Santra, Colorado State University)



Ingredients:

- 1 cup of hulled proso millet
- 2 cups of vegetable stock or water as egg-substitute: 1 tbsp flaxseed, ground, swollen with 3 tbsp water
- 2–3 tbsp flour of choice
- 1 pinch of salt
- Optional: spices like turmeric, black pepper, cumin
- Vegetable oil for frying

Preparation:

- Rinse the millet and bring to a boil with the vegetable stock or water. Let simmer for about 5 minutes.
- Afterward, let it rest covered for another 10 minutes. Stir in the egg substitute and flour and season to taste.
- Make small patties with wet hands. Set up a pan with the vegetable oil and fry the patties until they are crispy and golden brown on both sides.
- Serve with lettuce or pack into a burger and enjoy!

Concluding Remarks

The recipes in this article showcase the versatile culinary uses of proso millet. From traditional porridges enjoyed across Asia, Africa, and Europe to modern variations like millet pasta, patties, and fusion dishes, the ancient grain is growing in popularity worldwide. Incorporating

proso millet into recipes not only helps diversify diets but also supports resilient food systems. As millet products become more available in U.S. markets and interest in the grain increases among chefs, health-conscious consumers, and local food movements, millet has a promising future in American food baskets and dinner tables.



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