

Pseudocereals: Buck Wheat (Kuttu)

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In recent years, the consumption of functional food with bioactive ingredients has increased in consumers' diets. These functional foods provide nutritional as well as health benefits to end-use consumers. Among the health-related foods, pseudocereals are among the functional foods with numerous health benefits. However, pseudocereals are taxonomically different; they show similar characteristics to the poaceae family (wheat, rice, and barley) due to endosperm-rich starch components. The main pseudocereals with health-related benefits are buckwheat, amaranth, and quinoa. Buckwheat is one of the pseudocereals, belongs to the family of *polygonaceae*, and is commonly used in the cold region of the world. The buckwheat cultivars are mainly found in mountain regions, especially Russia and China.

Buckwheat, a revered crop of ancient Asia, flourishes in the hill regions of India such as Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh. It has been used in Indian cooking as a flour called 'Kuttu', and this plant's soft leaves are also ground to make an accompanying chutney. Buckwheat seeds are mainly used as breakfast cereals in the form of groats, flour for bakery products, and other enriched products such as bread, tea, honey, and sprouts. The various health-related benefits (hypocholesterolemic, hypoglycemic, anticancer, and anti-inflammatory) were associated with buckwheat and its byproducts which enhance their potential for functional food formulation (Mondal et al., 2021) and increase their agricultural, industrial, and pharmaceutical uses.

Nutritional benefits of buckwheat

Nutritional composition of buckwheat

Nutrient	Quantity/100gm
Energy (Kcal)	356
Carbohydrate (gm)	71.1
Protein(gm)	11.1
Fat(gm)	3.01
Fiber(gm)	4.0
Magnesium (mg)	203
Copper(mg)	0.48
Potassium(mg)	414
Thiamine (mg)	18.6
Riboflavine (mg)	0.178

Source:USDA, FOOD DATA CENTRAL

High in protein: Buckwheat is an excellent source of protein, containing all eight essential amino acids. This makes it a good choice for vegetarians and vegans who may struggle to get enough protein from other plant-based sources .

Rich in vitamins and minerals: Buckwheat is a good source of several important vitamins and minerals, including magnesium, potassium, iron, and B vitamins.

Gluten-free: Buckwheat is naturally gluten-free, making it a safe and nutritious option for people with celiac disease or gluten intolerance.

Low glycaemic index: Buckwheat has a low glycaemic index, which means it can help regulate blood sugar levels and may reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

High in fiber: Buckwheat is a good source of dietary fiber, which can help promote digestive health and may reduce the risk of heart disease. Overall, buckwheat is a highly nutritious and versatile food

Food products from Buckwheat

Despite its name, buckwheat is not related to wheat and is naturally gluten-free. Buckwheat seeds are a rich source of protein, dietary fiber, essential amino acids, vitamins, and minerals, making them a popular ingredient in a variety of food products.

Here is some food products made from buckwheat:

Buckwheat flour: Buckwheat flour is a popular ingredient in gluten-free baking, especially for pancakes, waffles, and bread.

Buckwheat noodles: Buckwheat noodles, also known as soba noodles, are a traditional Japanese dish. They are made from buckwheat flour and are often served cold with a dipping sauce or in a hot broth.

Buckwheat groats: Buckwheat groats are the hulled seeds of the buckwheat plant. They can be cooked like rice or used as a filling for stuffed vegetables or in salads .

Buckwheat porridge: Buckwheat porridge is a traditional Russian dish. It is made by cooking buckwheat groats with milk or water and is often served with butter, honey, or jam.

Buckwheat pancakes: Buckwheat pancakes are a popular breakfast dish in many countries. They are made from a mixture of buckwheat flour, eggs, and milk and are often served with syrup or fruit.

Buckwheat bread: Buckwheat bread is a gluten-free bread made from buckwheat flour. It has a nutty flavour and is dense and hearty.

Buckwheat honey: Buckwheat honey is a dark, rich honey with a strong, distinctive flavour. It is high in antioxidants and is often used as a natural remedy for coughs and sore throats.

Buckwheat beer: Buckwheat beer is a gluten-free beer made from buckwheat malt. It has a nutty flavour and is often used as a substitute for traditional beer in gluten-free diets.

