

## Everything You Need to Know About Ragi Malt Benefits and Recipes

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Nowadays we are so enamored by packaged and good-looking food that we have almost shown the door to our traditional foods. A generation ago we were familiar with millets and its essential nutrients. But today, the humble finger millet or ragi has been carelessly nudged aside for convenient foods. Was it a good choice? Given the sharp rise of diseases that has afflicted us, not by any measure! Unfortunately, we have given ragi the royal ignore when it is such a nutritive crop. It is well adapted to the Indian soil and is grown widely in the southern part of India.



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Everything  
You Need to Know About  
**RAGI MALT**  
and How You Can Cook  
It Easily

Nutritionists have emphasized the point that local and freshfoods are not only more sustainable as far as our economy is concerned, but can also keep nutrition intact as foreign foods have to “travel” long distances. By the time they land on our plates, they lose more than half their nutritive value.

### Ragi it’s History and Benefits

Finger millet or Ragi was first harvested in Africa and has been systematically cultivated for a number of years in Uganda and Ethiopia. In India, the crop was probably introduced about 4000 years ago and evidence of its presence has been found as far back as the Harappan civilization. So, this is one grain which is steeped in history, what are its benefits?



- **Ragi is rich in protein-** It has high protein content. [The main protein content is known as eleusine](#), the bioavailability of which is quite high, so the body can easily absorb the nutrients. There are also generous quantities of tryptophan, cystine, methionine and other amino acids, which are essential for boosting the human growth hormone. Ragi is particularly beneficial for vegetarians as it contains methionine, which comprises of 5% of the protein.
- **Anti-cancer properties-** Finger millet has high levels of anti-oxidants. That seems to be the “it word” nowadays since the high levels of anti-oxidants prevent over oxidation, which causes most diseases and rapid aging. Studies have shown that people who include finger millet in their diet have lower incidences of esophageal cancer than people whose diet is based on maize or wheat.
- **Ragi reduces the risk of heart attacks-** LDL or (Low-Density Lipoprotein) cholesterol has a rap of being the bad cholesterol and it becomes all the more dangerous as oxidized LDL, because it leads to inflammation in the arteries, which in turn leads to arteriosclerosis and the [risk of heart attack or strokes](#).
- **Ragi reduces the risk of diabetes-** Diabetes is clearly on the rise today, with India even being touted as the “Diabetes Capital”. In order to combat this deadly disease, we need to consume complex carbohydrates are rich in fiber and chock-a-block with phytochemicals. Phytochemicals empower us to fight diseases. The outer coat of ragi contains polyphenols; and ragi thus helps control sudden spikes in blood sugar levels, reduce oxidative stress and also reduce the chances of a sudden drop in blood sugar levels, known as hypoglycemia.



- **It is anti-microbial-** Finger millets have great microbial properties and act as a shield to block out bacteria like Salmonella, which gives way to typhoid like conditions, and Staphylococcus aureus, which results in skin infections.
- **It is a great source of minerals-** Ragi is a great source of essential minerals like calcium, phosphorus, potassium and iron. Since calcium is so important to maintain our bone density, we must include ragi in our meals. It is, in fact, a must for those people who have are at [risk for osteoporosis](#) and people with low hemoglobin levels. In fact, it has been touted as a super cereal, as people in Uganda and Southern Sudan consume finger millet and little else, yet they flaunt strapping physiques.
- **Stay young with ragi-** Ragi is full of antioxidants and has a high phenolic content, which helps in preventing cross-linking of collagen. Collagen gives elasticity to tissue and cross-linking inhibits the production of collagen. Thus, ragi helps keep you young and healthy in every way.
- **A feeling of satiety and well-being-** Since ragi contains tryptophan, it helps induce sleep, so instead of reaching out to over the counter pills, stick to a diet comprising of fiber rich ragi. It will help do away with dizziness, fatigue, insomnia and migraines. It increases your feelings of relaxation and well-being.

## Ragi Malt and other Ragi Recipes

Since ragi is inexpensive, it can be easily used for a number of dishes, even in baby food as it is easily digestible. So definitely try and include ragi in your diet and hopefully there will be a reversal in the fortunes of this much-ignored grain.



The fact that it is gluten-free makes it a must have for people who want to stay fit and healthy, and are looking at gluten-free options in their diet. The ragi malt is a very [nutritious breakfast option](#) and gives you the kick start to a hectic day.

There is a common misconception that ragi is not very tasty, but we're here to tell you that you can make the most delectable of dishes with it. We've got more than a few ragi based recipes to tickle your taste buds for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

## 1. Ragi Malt

Ragi malt is a very popular baby food, especially favored in states like Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and other places in South India, because it is easy to digest, even though its nutritional value is somewhat decreased when it is had in the malt form.



**To Make Ragi Malted Flour, you need to follow these steps:**

- Soak the ragi grains for close to 12 hours. Germinate by tying them in a thin/muslin cloth for 2-3 days
- Dry the germinated grains
- Remove the roots
- Dry roast them
- Grind to a fine powder and sieve

**Method:**

1. Ragi Malt Salty Version
2. Mix 3-4 tsp. of ragi malted flour with a little bit of water, just enough to make into a thick paste.
3. Boil 1 cup of water
4. Add salt
5. Add the ragi paste, stir continuously so that no lumps are formed and cook for 2-3 minutes
6. You can also add buttermilk/yogurt after it cools down.
7. Ragi Malt – Sweet version
8. Mix 3-4 tsp. of ragi malted flour with a little bit of water; make a paste out of it.
9. Boil 1 cup of water
10. Add 3-4 tsp. of jaggery
11. Add 1/4 tsp. of cardamom powder
12. Add the ragi paste and cook for 2-3 minutes, keep stirring till all lumps are dissolved.
13. You can have it either hot or cold.

## 2. Ragi Bread

Make your regular bread more nutritious by adding ragi, and the fact that you make it at home minus the preservatives gives it a definite edge over the bread available at stores.



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**Ingredients:**

- 1 cup ragi Atta
- 1 cup whole wheat flour (Atta)
- 100 gm Gur (jaggery)
- 1 tsp. refined oil
- 1/2 kg chopped spinach
- Cup of curd

- 1 tsp. baking soda

**Method:**

Take a bowl and put the above ingredients in it. Blend it all in till you get the right consistency. Spread the mixture in a baking dish and put in the oven for 40 minutes at 180 degrees. Take it out from the oven and slice evenly.

### 3. Ragi Chapatti

The pulverized version of whole-wheat available in the market is often stripped of all nutrients. So, substitute regular wheat with ragi and you will get a wholesome nutritious option to try for your main meals.



**Ingredients:**

- 3 cups ragi flour
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 carrot, grated
- 10 curry leaves, finely chopped
- A small bunch of cilantro/coriander, finely chopped
- 1/4 tsp. red chilli powder
- 1 tsp. cumin seeds
- 1 tsp. sesame seeds
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 tsp. salt

**Method:**

1. Blend all the ingredients except water.
2. Sprinkle water and knead the flour.
3. Keep adding water until you get a consistency to make dough balls.
4. Unlike the chapatti dough, it has to be kneaded using one hand.
5. Take a clean square-shaped cotton cloth. A clean handkerchief will do as well and keep it for this purpose.
6. Take water in a bowl and immerse the cloth. Dip the cloth in water, then squeeze out the water and spread it on a flat surface.
7. Keep the ragi flour in the center, and pat it with palm to form a circular shape.
8. You can keep dipping your hand in water if you feel flour is sticking to your hand. Do it slowly.
9. Keep patting till you get the right shape.
10. Heat the pan.

11. Now lift the cotton cloth by holding the two corners on one side.
12. The roti should be facing you, now put the cloth on the tava so that roti is on tava, and cloth is upwards.
13. Remove the cloth slowly, so that roti sticks to the pan.
14. Moisten the roti with a little oil and close the lid
15. Increase the heat.
16. Remove the lid and flip the roti to the other side.
17. You will know it is cooked when it changes color.
18. Remove it from heat and serve hot.

#### 4. Crunchy Ragi Cookies

If you are seeking a guilt free way of enjoying a cookie with your cup of Joe, look no further than ragi cookies. This has no refined sugar, so it can absolutely be your go-to snack to sink your teeth into.



#### Ingredients:

- 1 cup ragi flour
- 1/2 cup brown cane sugar
- 1/2 Tbsp green cardamom powder
- 2 pinches of ginger powder
- 1/2 Tbsp baking powder
- 1/2 cup oil (rice bran)
- 1 egg whisked
- 1/2 Tbsp salt or to taste

#### Method:

1. Mix the ragi flour and cardamom powder. Then dry roast this gently on a pan for a minute or two till the color darkens.
2. In a bowl, break an egg and whisk it. Add the roasted ragi with the sugar.
3. Blend well.
4. Add the dry ginger and salt to it.
5. Add the oil and knead well. The dough will look a little dark.
6. Make round balls and press them with your palm.
7. Pre-heat the oven for 5-7 minutes. Take a flat dish, put butter paper on it. You can skip the greasing bit.
8. Place the round doughs an inch away from each other and bake for 8 minutes at 180 degree Celsius.
9. Cool it and enjoy!

## 5. Ragi Laddoo

We often crave for something sweet just after our main meals. Instead of having something sugary and not very healthy, ragi laddoos can be an ideal substitute. The fact that it is kneaded with ghee and coconut makes it a healthy bet. Nothing healthier than a traditional sweet, isn't it? This recipe is sweet, savory and comforting, and will remind you of your grandmother's culinary skills.



### Ingredients:

- 1 cup: Ragi (Finger Millet) flour
- 1/2 cup Ghee
- 1/2 cup: Palm Sugar
- 1/4 cup: Grated Fresh Coconut
- 2 tbsp.: Black Sesame
- 2 tbsps.: Groundnuts
- 8-10 Almonds
- 1/4 tsp.: Cardamom powder

### Method:

1. In a shallow pan and on low heat, dry roast black sesame, groundnuts, and grated fresh coconut separately. Let them cool.
2. Remove the skin from the groundnuts.
3. Add a little bit of ghee to the pan and toast the almonds for a minute or two and keep them aside.
4. Add the Ragi flour to the pan along with 2-3 tbsps. of ghee and keep roasting for 15-20 minutes. Add more ghee to moisten it.
5. Add the roasted almonds, groundnuts, coconut and black sesame. Keep stirring.
6. Add the palm sugar and cardamom powder. Stir for another 2 minutes.
7. Remove from heat and let it cool.
8. Apply ghee onto your palm; take 3-4 tbsp. of the mixture and roll into round balls. Add more ghee if needed to make firm small balls or laddoos.

It is time we gave our traditional foods a dekho, because it is true that our ancestors have been right all along. [Local and fresh foods are what keep us healthy](#), not something which we are unfamiliar with. Now you can choose something like mango over kiwi or millets over quinoa, these choices do not cause a dent in your pocket and give you way more satiety than overly marketed packaged foods.



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