

Nigerian Foods That Are Rich in Fiber

Most Nigerian fiber-rich foods are often overlooked because people lack knowledge of their nutritional value. In this article, you'll learn about high-fiber Nigerian foods you should add to your diet.

Key takeaways

- Fiber is a type of carbohydrate found in plants. Enzymes cannot break them down, so they pass through the digestive system largely unchanged.
- Fiber-rich foods can help reduce constipation, regulate blood sugar levels, lower the level of low-density lipoprotein (dubbed bad cholesterol), and aid weight loss.
- There are two types of fiber: soluble and insoluble fiber. Both types of fiber have great health benefits.
- Some Nigerian foods that are rich in fiber include corn, beans, yam, avocado, guava, sweet potato, and tiger nuts. Eating them will boost your nutrition and improve your health greatly.

Fiber is a carbohydrate that is hard for the body to digest. [\[1\]](#) Unlike other carbohydrates, which are broken down into glucose or sugar, fibers cannot be broken down. They are resistant to the actions of enzymes found in the gastrointestinal tract.

One of the reasons you need fiber in your diet is to prevent constipation; therefore, eating little or no fiber increases the risk of constipation and makes you more likely to pass hard stools, which can be painful and uncomfortable.

Another reason you need fiber in your diet is because there is growing evidence that a high dietary fiber intake could decrease the risks of coronary heart disease, stroke, hypertension, [diabetes](#), and cancers such as colorectal and breast cancer. [\[2\]](#) Fiber also helps keep you full for longer, which makes it an excellent choice for those struggling with proper dieting and weight loss.

Dietary fiber is found in fruits, vegetables, tubers, seeds, nuts, and whole-grain cereals. It is an essential nutritional requirement. However, most people fail to meet the required daily intake of approximately 25 to 30 grams daily for adults. [\[3\]](#)

There are two main types of dietary fiber: soluble and insoluble.

- Soluble fibers dissolve in water to form a gel-like substance in the intestine. They help slow digestion and reduce glucose absorption, keeping blood sugar in check. [\[4\]](#)

- Insoluble fibers cannot dissolve in water and remain intact during digestion. However, when they reach the colon, which is part of the large intestine, the microbiota, or good bacteria, ferment and feed on them to nourish and keep the intestines healthy.

People with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) may complain of bloating, flatulence, abdominal pain, and constipation after eating fiber-rich foods. Even people without IBS may experience some adverse effects if they eat too much fiber. The key is to start slow and gradually increase your intake.

10 Nigerian foods that are high in fiber

You can improve your diet with these Nigerian fiber-rich foods.

1. Corn (Maize)

Corn is a popular Nigerian food that is enjoyed by both the young and old. It contains 4g of insoluble fiber and about 5.8 g when turned into air-popped popcorn. [\[5\]](#)

Corn contains [high fiber](#) that aid digestion, prevent constipation, and help with blood sugar control. It can be boiled, roasted, or processed into akamu (fermented corn pudding), a breakfast staple.

2. Cocoyam

Cocoyam is another Nigerian food that is rich in fiber. There are several varieties; the white cocoyam contains approximately [1.31 g](#) of fibre and is high in vitamins and minerals. Cocoyam is best enjoyed roasted, boiled, or used as a thickener in soups. The leaves are used to prepare dishes like Ekpang Nkukwo, a popular dish in Akwa Ibom State.

3. Beans

Beans contain approximately 7.8–9.2 g [\[5\]](#) of soluble and insoluble fiber per 100 grams. In addition to helping regulate blood sugar levels, beans promote digestion and aid in [weight management](#).

Beans can be eaten alone or with plantain. They can also be used to make snacks like Moi-Moi (steamed bean pudding) and Akara (bean cakes). The current U.S. [Dietary guideline](#) recommends 1-3 cups of legumes per week or at least half a cup of beans daily.

4. Whole grain foods

Whole grain foods are rich in soluble fiber. The foods in this category include:

- Oats
- Brown rice
- Millet
- Guinea corn (sorghum)
- Acha (fonio), and whole wheat flour.

They help [lower cholesterol](#), stabilize blood sugar levels, and promote satiety.

Brown rice and acha can be boiled and eaten with stew. Oats and whole wheat flour can be used to bake cakes or bread. Millet and guinea corn can be processed into pap or local drinks like kunu or used as a swallow for soup.

5. Yam

Yam is a common Nigerian food that serves many functions. One cup contains about 5.3g of insoluble fiber. [\[5\]](#) It provides the body with energy and is rich in vitamins.

It is best enjoyed boiled, roasted, fried, or pounded into a dough (pounded yam) and eaten with native soups.

6. Fruits

Most fruits are great sources of soluble and insoluble fibers. The fruits rich in soluble fibers are avocado (5.0 g), apple (2 g), pear (5.5 g), guava (8.9 g), orange (3.7 g), banana (3.2 g). [\[5\]](#)

[Fruits](#) are equally rich in vitamins and minerals. They aid digestion, boost the immune system, lower blood sugar, and help with weight management. You can mix different fruits to make a nutritious, tasty smoothie. You need to eat about one cup of fruit daily to meet the dietary requirement.

7. Sweet Potato

Potatoes are staple Nigerian foods that are rich in fiber. Each medium-sized potato contains about 6.3 g of fiber, mainly insoluble fiber that supports gut health. Sweet potatoes are rich in beta-carotene, which helps regulate blood sugar levels. They can be boiled, baked, or mashed.

8. Vegetables

Vegetables are nutritious and high in fiber. High-fiber vegetables are typically leafy greens like:

- Spinach
- Waterleaf
- Okazi
- Fluted pumpkin leaves

Other readily available vegetables in Nigeria to include in your meal are okra, garden egg leaves, broccoli, lettuce, cabbage, and celery.

Okra can be prepared as a soup and enjoyed with any type of swallow, while the others can be used in making vegetable soups or salads. The amount of vegetables you need to meet the daily dietary intake may depend on age, sex, height, weight, physical activity, and condition (pregnant/breastfeeding). [One cup of vegetable](#) is recommended, and here's what counts as one cup:

- 1 cup of raw, cooked, frozen, or canned vegetables
- 2 cups of raw leafy salad greens
- 1 cup of 100% vegetable juice

9. Nuts

Nuts are known for their high fiber content. Examples of high-fiber nuts include:

- Tiger nut
- Coconut
- Bitter kola
- Walnut
- Groundnut
- Cashewnut
- Almonds

Nuts are also packed with essential vitamins and minerals. They can be enjoyed alone or used for smoothies and parfaits. You need to eat about [20-30 g](#) or one handful of nuts or seeds a day to meet the required daily dietary intake.

10. Fufu

Fufu is a popular Nigerian swallow that is processed from cassava. One cup of fufu contains 7.4 g of insoluble fiber. [\[5\]](#) It can retain its fiber no matter the processing it undergoes. Fufu can be used as a swallow to enjoy any soup.

Other Nigerian foods high in fiber include:

- Breadfruit (8.0 g of fiber)
- Pigeon pea (5.7g of fiber)
- Cowpea (5.6g of fiber)
- Plantain (3.1g of fiber).

Benefits of fiber in the body

Fiber-rich food provides numerous health benefits; some of them include:

Healthy Digestive system

Fiber-rich foods promote regular bowel movements and help prevent constipation and diverticulitis. [\[6\]](#) They also help maintain a healthy gut environment by providing food for beneficial bacteria.

Cancer Reduction

The findings of a 2020 study published in the American Cancer Society journal suggest that a high intake of total fiber was associated with a reduced overall breast cancer incidence. [\[7\]](#)

The American Institute for Cancer Research reports strong evidence that 90 grams (about 3 ounces) of whole grains daily reduces the risk of colorectal cancer by 17 percent. [\[8\]](#)

Cardiovascular Health

Consumption of fiber-rich foods may help lower low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol levels. LDL is known as bad cholesterol because it raises the risk of cardiovascular disease and stroke.

A meta-analysis of 67 controlled trials found a benefit of dietary soluble fiber in lowering total and LDL cholesterol. Dietary fiber may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease (CHD) through various mechanisms, such as lowering blood pressure and improving insulin sensitivity. [\[9\]](#)

Blood Sugar Regulation

Fiber-rich foods help regulate blood sugar levels by slowing down the absorption of carbohydrates.

Fiber-rich foods, especially whole grains, may help reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes. [\[10\]](#)

Weight Management

Fiber can help an overweight or obese individual lose weight because fiber creates a feeling of fullness and satiety. The result of a study suggested that eating 30 grams of fiber each day can help one lose weight. [\[11\]](#)

Conclusion

Fiber-rich foods have numerous health benefits and should be included in your daily diet; unfortunately, this isn't something most people do. The list of foods in this article is not exhaustive, so feel free to explore and discover other tasty, fiber-dense foods.

FAQs

What foods have the most fiber?

Nigerian foods with high fiber content include sweet potatoes (6.3 g), guava (8.9 g), beans (9.2 g), avocado (5.0 g), breadfruit (5.7 g), popcorn (5.8 g), fufu (7.4 g), yam (5.3 g), coconut (4.6 g), and tigernut (10 g).

Remember, there are many others that are not mentioned here. These are just a few to help point you in the right direction as to what you can add to your daily meals to improve your fiber intake.

Are Nigerian beans high in fiber?

Yes, Nigerian beans are high in fiber. They contain about 5.3 grams of dietary fiber when cooked. Nigerian beans are also rich in protein and other essential nutrients.

Should you eat fiber in the morning or night?

While it is important to meet the daily intake, it's best to eat fiber-rich foods in the morning because it has advantages, such as allowing for proper bowel movements and keeping you full for longer throughout the day.

References

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