

Thanks to all the photographers and people who have put
Amaranth photos and information on the web.

My hope is that with our help many people will regain an interest
in growing, harvesting, and benefiting from this amazing Sacred
Plant we call Amaranth.

I especially want thank everyone with the Pueblo City-County
Library District for their interest in re-discovering indigenous
foods and wellness and for doing their part in bringing this
important information into our lives.



Eduardo Griego Gonzales Junlajuj B'atz, Ajqij

Cover Photo by Brandon Dey
Silver City, NM

Even a crack in the street can be home to Amaranth

Amaranth

The Forgotten Sacred Food



Amaranth has had a difficult past...In the Americas

Amaranth has always been an important food source in many parts of the world. So why would an important food source like Amaranth have a difficult past in the Americas.

It is said that Amaranth was an important part of the diet of most people living as hunter gatherers in North America throughout time. It was also cultivated by the Olmec, Toltec, Maya, and Azteca for at least 6,000-8,000 years ago throughout Central America as greens and grain. Amaranth was not just a food staple for the ancient Meso-americans, it played a big part as a sacred food in their ceremony. We know that during sacred holidays, the Azteca built statues of their deity using amaranth grain and honey. These statues were worshipped, broken, and handed out to everyone in the village for eating. This practice is the primary reason amaranth did not survive as a staple. When the Spanish arrived with Cortez, as part of their efforts to force Christianity on the pagan natives, they outlawed the grain. Amaranth fields were burned and cultivators were punished.

There are stories that tell of the conquistadors cutting off the hands of those who had it growing in their gardens and around their homes. This was a very sad part of the history of Amaranth because it grows almost everywhere and is difficult to keep it from growing anywhere. However, over the years the Church won out and Amaranth was almost completely eliminated from the stomachs, hearts and minds of those living in this part of the world.

Growing Amaranth

As far as growing goes, amaranth prefers higher elevations but can be grown in many elevations with the proper soil. It also has some agricultural advantages. First, if there is enough water to get the crop established, it can be grown with very little water. It can generate seeds with up to 40 days of no rain. It is drought-tolerant and thrives in areas with a lot of sun. Second, early frost isn't a problem. It's planted late and autumn frost is actually necessary because it dries the seed, preparing it to be harvested.



Alegría



Gluten Free Bread



Fortunately, Amaranth was reintroduced back to the United States in the 1970s. Today, amaranth is grown in a few locations in the United States, and we are able to enjoy this grain despite its rough past!



There are around 60 different species of amaranth, and a few of them are native to Mesoamerica and there are plans in motion to help make this tasty and nutritious food source find its way back into the kitchens and *cosinas* of the Americas today.

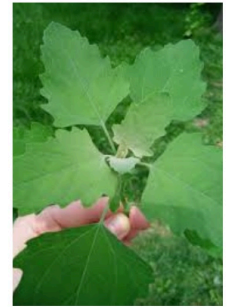
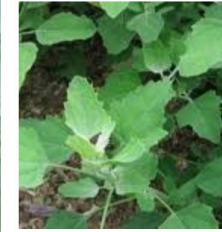
Most people who are aware of amaranth think of it as a grain. It isn't actually a cereal grain by definition, but belongs to another plant family entirely, Amaranthaceae. However, because its nutritional composition is so similar, it is often included with cereal grains.



What's So Great About Amaranth? In addition to taste it is very nutritious.

It's said that amaranth contains **up to 87% of total human nutrients**. First of all, it's high in protein, even higher than quinoa, at 9 grams per cooked cup. It's also loaded with 5 grams of fiber per cup, and is gluten-free. Amaranth is full of **vital vitamins, minerals and nutrients**, including:

Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Folate, Calcium, Iron, Magnesium, Potassium, Copper, Zinc, Manganese, Vitamin B6, and Riboflavin



Quelites

Amaranth greens called *Quelites* or *Kelites* grow just about everywhere. One version of wild spinach is called Lambs Quarter and is also known as Pigweed it is one of the plants targeted by weed killers. So, it is true that many people are killing a plant they think of as a weed, but instead is a delicious healthy food. When harvested in the early stages of its life, it is Amaranth sprouts are called MicroGreens and offer amazing health benefits.



Recipes

Amaranth Porridge

CALORIES	SERVES	COOK TIME
373	2	25

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup of amaranth
- 1 cup of water
- 1 cup of vegetable milk of your choice
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 2 tablespoons of agave nectar or rice syrup (optional)
- 1 pinch of salt
- To garnish, use nuts, dried fruit, coconut, cinnamon powder, and whatever else you may like (optional)

PREPARATION

1. Soak amaranth for at least 4 hours with twice the water.
2. Pass it through a fine mesh strainer and rinse it under running water.
3. Bring to the fire a pot with water, vegetable drink, cinnamon stick and amaranth.
4. When it starts to boil, reduce the heat to the minimum and cover with the lid. Let it cook for about 25 minutes until the amaranth is cooked.
5. Season with a little salt and if you want add 2 tablespoons of rice syrup or whatever you prefer.
6. Put in the bowl and if necessary you can add a little more milk. Garnish with seeds, nuts, coconut, cinnamon.

Amaranth Pancakes/Flat bread

Ingredients:

2 large eggs
1 1/4 cups milk (or water or non-dairy milk)*
3 tablespoons melted butter or vegetable oil
1 1/2 cups amaranth flour
3/4 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons baking powder (aluminum Free)
*Add more milk for thinner pancakes, less for thicker cakes.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Beat the eggs and milk until light and foamy. Stir in the butter or vegetable oil.
2. Whisk the dry ingredients together to evenly distribute the salt, baking powder, and sugar. Gently and quickly mix into the egg and milk mixture. Let the batter rest for at least 15 minutes, while the griddle is heating; it'll thicken slightly.
3. Heat a heavy frying pan over medium heat, or set an electric griddle to 375°F. Lightly grease frying pan or griddle. The pan or griddle is ready if a drop of water will skitter across the surface, evaporating immediately.
4. Drop 1/4 cupfuls of batter onto the lightly greased griddle. Bake on one side until bubbles begin to form and break, about 2 minutes; then turn the pancakes and cook the other side until brown, about 1 1/2 to 2 minutes. Turn over only once. Serve immediately.

Recipes

Amaranth Spinach Flatbread Recipe

2 cups finely chopped spinach

2 cups amaranth flour

1-1 1/2 tsps. salt

1- 1 1/2 tsp. each dried dill and basil

1 tsp. gluten-free baking powder

2-3 T. olive oil

Water, as needed

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Spray a large baking sheet with organic pan spray or line with parchment paper.

Put the chopped spinach with water to cover in a microwave-safe bowl and nuke until the spinach is wilted. Drain off the water. In a large bowl, combine the spinach, flour, salt, herbs, olive oil and baking powder. Slowly add small amounts of water (about 1/2 cup) as needed to get the dough to stick together. Shape the dough into a ball. Moisten your hands frequently with cold water to prevent the dough from sticking to your hands. Grab the dough in your hands and place it on the prepared baking sheet. Keep your hands moistened and press the dough out into a large flatbread about 1/8-inch thick. Spray the top lightly with olive oil and place in the oven for 25-30 minutes. Remove from the oven, allow to cool and then cut into large or small pieces. But if you can't wait, grab off a piece, spread with safe margarine and enjoy!

Sweet Corn Tamales - Amaranth

Grind 6 cups cooked hominy

- Grind Hominy
- 1 can Creamed Corn
- 1/4 cup Coconut Sugar
- 1 TBL Salt
- 1 cup Lard
- 1 cups Amaranth Flour
- 2 TBL Rumford Baking Powder (Aluminum Free)

Mix by hand or Kitchen Mixer

Add 3/4-1 cup Chicken or Vegetable Broth until dough becomes a smooth consistency — 3-4 minutes
Test by putting small ball of dough in water. When it floats the dough has been mixed enough.

Next:

1. Soak Corn Husks
2. Spread Masa dough on smooth side of husk
3. Add strips of Green Chiles
4. Add Cheese
5. Wrap in Corn Husk
6. Wrap in Wax Paper

Use Stainless Steel Pressure Cooker:

- Place wrapped tamales standing upright on trivet out of the water
- Add 1 inch of water on bottom of pressure cooker
- Pressure Cook on high 20 minutes