

Teff: an ancient Ethiopian grain and global nutrition all-star

Teff presents a unique opportunity for athletes and active individuals to discover a new competitive edge - not only for athletic performance but also, and importantly, for overall health and wellbeing.



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Teff, scientifically known as *Eragrostis tef*, is a tiny but mighty grain with ancient origins rooted in the Horn of Africa, specifically Ethiopia and Eritrea. It's a grass that uses 10% less water than wheat to grow and for over 3,000 years it has been a cornerstone of traditional diets and a symbol of cultural heritage in these regions.

In recent years, teff has transitioned from a local treasure to gaining international recognition as a nutritional powerhouse. It is often referred to as a superior fuel for active individuals and has been hailed as the "runner's super food" given the winning tradition of Ethiopian marathoners.

While teff has been fueling elite athletes and everyday warriors in its native East Africa for millennia, it's now making its mark in the Western world as the most-hungry grain for performance nutrition.

Teff - The ancient grain that outperforms other staples. Teff stands out as a nutritional all-star when compared to other popular grains like wheat, rice, and quinoa.



One of the most remarkable features of teff is its amino acid profile, offering a complete set of essential amino acids, which is rare among plant-based foods. In contrast, grains like wheat and rice lack certain essential amino acids, making them incomplete protein sources.

The mineral content of teff is another area where it outshines its counterparts. Teff is an excellent source of calcium, providing approximately 123 mg per cup, which is significantly more than wheat (~22 mg per cup) and brown rice (~20 mg per cup).

It's also rich in iron, with around 5 mg per cup, compared to quinoa's 2.8 mg and wheat's 1.4 mg per cup. Additionally, teff is low in phytic acid¹, meaning that the iron from teff is more easily absorbed by the body. *Phytic acid is an inhibitor of iron absorption meaning that the iron in teff can be better absorbed than the iron in other plant-based sources.

Teff also boasts an impressive fibre content, which contributes to better gut and cardiovascular health, as well as helping to

manage blood sugar levels [1]. While a cup of cooked quinoa contains about 5 grams of dietary fibre, teff provides around 7-8 grams per cup. In comparison, white rice falls far short, offering only about 0.6 grams of fibre per cup.

10 Reasons to Include Teff Within Your Diet

Whether you're an athlete looking for an edge, a fitness enthusiast wanting to up your game, or just someone interested in enhancing your health, teff offers a nutritionally-packed solution to elevate your diet and overall well-being.

“To me, teff is everything”

- Haile Gebrselassie
8-Time World Champion Runner

1. Sustained energy

Teff is made up of 20-40% resistant starch and is low on the glycemic index. When teff is consumed, it releases its energy slowly helping to provide a consistent energy source over a prolonged period of time. A steady supply of energy, such as that provided by teff, may help prevent energy crashes and maintain both mental and physical performance.

Did you know that Ethiopian runners have been reaping the benefits of teff for years? While scientists are still exploring all the ways teff can boost endurance, it's already a staple for these elite athletes.

2. Impressive nutrient profile

Teff is a favourite grain of elite endurance athletes because of its impressive nutritional profile. Teff contains calcium, iron, copper, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, and zinc. It is also a good source of antioxidant polyphenols and is the only ancient grain to contain vitamin C.

3. Gut health

Due to its high fibre, micronutrient and resistant starch content, the inclusion of teff into the daily diet may contribute towards a healthy gut microbiome. 20-40% of teff's carbohydrate content is resistant starch which isn't absorbed by the body but instead acts as a probiotic, feeding good bacteria in the gut [2].

Maintaining a healthy gut is essential for overall wellbeing. Our gut is not merely a site for digestion, but a complex system interconnected with our immune system, brain, and several other organs. It houses trillions of microbes, forming a unique ecosystem called the microbiome. These microbes play a vital role in breaking down food, absorbing nutrients, and also in the production of essential vitamins (Farthing et al, 2007). A balanced gut microbiome helps in maintaining an optimal immune response, thus helping to prevent infections and diseases.

Moreover, recent research has shown a significant connection between gut health and mental wellbeing through a bidirectional communication channel termed the "gut-brain axis." A healthy gut also supports metabolic regulation, thereby aiding in maintaining a healthy weight. Hence, nurturing gut health should be a priority for leading a healthy and wholesome life [3-6].

4. Micronutrient absorption

Teff contains high amounts of ferric, caffeic, and galactocatechic, which have been shown to improve micronutrient absorption [2].

5. Complete Protein

Teff is almost unique among grains for being a "complete" protein, meaning that it provides all nine essential amino acids required for human nutrition. This makes teff a particularly attractive option for athletes and health-conscious consumers, as well as vegetarians and vegans who might struggle to source all essential amino acids from other plant-based foods.

6. Gluten Free

Teff is naturally gluten-free, making it an ideal option for those with gluten sensitivities or celiac disease. While other gluten-free grains like rice and quinoa are available, teff's nutritional superiority (or 'completeness') gives it an edge.

7. Weight Management

Using teff as a vehicle to increase dietary fibre intake may enhance satiety (feelings of fullness) and aid in long-term weight management. The fibre increases the viscosity of stomach contents, thereby prolonging digestion and increasing feelings of fullness [7,8].

8. A new way to boost your "plant points"

Adding teff to your diet offers a natural and effective way of increasing your "plant points", which is beneficial for both your personal health and the health of the planet.

Why increasing your "Plant Points" with teff is beneficial:

Nutrient Diversity: A varied intake of plant-based foods ensures that you're getting a broad spectrum of nutrients, vitamins, and minerals essential for optimal health and performance [9].

Reduced Disease Risk: Increasing your "plant points" by including a variety of plant-based foods (like teff) can lower the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes [10].

Gut Health: A diverse plant-based diet fosters a healthy and diverse gut microbiome, which has its own set of benefits for immune function and overall well-being [11].

Sustainability: More "plant points" generally equate to a lower environmental impact, which is essential in the context of climate change and sustainable food systems [12].

9. A grain for the future

As well as being great for human health, teff is a good crop for the planet. Although teff uses more space per kilo yield of wheat, it uses far less water, is a hardy crop that can grow in poor soils, and requires no pesticides or chemical fertilisers. According to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization, 75% of the world's food currently comes from just 12 plants and 5 animal species [13]. Increasing the widespread use of teff has the potential to increase food security, ensuring diversity across the food chain and reliance on resilient crops.

10. The Teff Rites Solution

Over the past five years, we've worked hard to create a healthy, delicious and convenient way for anybody to incorporate the benefits of teff into their daily diet. Our Teff Superblend Rites are the ultimate on-the-go snack for nourishing wellbeing and performance, everyday.

Teff Superblend Rites

Fusing innovation with tradition, Superblend Rites are the ultimate permissible indulgence. They are gluten-free, plant-based, high-in fibre, and made with nothing artificial.

Superblend Rites deliver a good source of slowly digested carbohydrates, fibre to support gut health, and micronutrients such as iron, manganese and phosphorus that all play key roles in several biological processes important to the athlete, and everyday wellbeing.

Our Rites are baked in our own UK-based factory, and our ingredients are sustainably and responsibly sourced to amplify impact across the supply chain.

Your new high performance habit

Teff Rites are more than just a snack—they're a daily ritual for a high performance life. Whether you're crushing it at the gym, heading back to back meetings, or chasing after the kids, Superblend Rites provide the sustained energy and nutritional benefits your body needs to perform at its best, every day.

Delicious, convenient, and crafted from all-natural ingredients, Superblend bites are the perfect complement to a balanced diet.

The smart on-the-go snack. Superblend bites fit perfectly into busy lifestyles - as a quick source of fuel before a gym session, a mid-morning or mid-afternoon pick-me-up, as a healthy snack for busy parents or children on-the-go, or as a nourishing late-night indulgence. Superblend bites are an incredibly versatile choice that caters to busy lifestyles without the addition of ultra-processed ingredients. They are the smart alternative to ultra-processed snacking without mountains of meal-prep and planning.

How can Superblend bites fit into your lifestyle?



Travel-Friendly



Alternative to Sweet Treats



Support 24-Hour Recovery

Read what others are saying about teff:

[Teff: The Superfood You Should Be Eating - *Wired Journal*](#)

[Get chock: Teff \(grain\) boosts stomach microbiome health. *Cornell University*](#)

[What is Teff, and How Can Adding It to Your Diet Help Your Performance? - *Runner's World*](#)

[Iron nutrition: how a humble grain could boost your performance. *A Hamilton*](#)

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