# Fonio the miracle grain

Fonio is the oldest grain of Africa and a really special one. People call it a “miracle grain”. Why will be discussed later. But first, where it all started. Fonio is grown all over the African continent. Today you find it especially in the western part of the Sahel region of Africa, this is the semiarid region which is situated south of the Sahara. Fonio is considered to be the tastiest of all cereals in West Africa, it has a slightly nutty flavor, something between couscous and quinoa in both appearance and texture.

Today fonio is seen as a miracle grain. But why? When we take a closer look at the nutritional side of fonio, it is a miracle grain. First of all, it is an enormous source of protein, which offers many advantages. Besides, there is another aspect why fonio is so nutritious, it contains methionine and cysteine. These amino acids are missing in most other major grains. Methionine is an essential amino acid, which means that our bodies cannot produce it and we have to take it all from our food. Secondly, fonio is also a good source of carbohydrates. The proportion of sugar is natural and negligible. Furthermore, there is also a certain proportion of fibre, which again is only beneficial. Fonio scores low on the glycemic index, which means that it doesn't have a large impact on blood sugar levels. The amount of fat is very low, this also applies to saturated fats. In addition, a small amount of salt is naturally presented in fonio. Moreover, fonio is vegan and gluten–free. which makes the cereal is accessible to more people, offering more opportunities in different countries.

Fonio is also a cereal that is suitable for different ages because it is nutritive for everyone. It's especially recommended for children, old people with difficulties digesting other cereals, sick people, and for people suffering from diabetes or stomach diseases because fonio is easy to digest. For babies, it's recommended from the time they are allowed to eat solid food.

Fonio is easy to grow a crop, it doesn’t need much water en grows in poor soil without chemical pesticides, herbicides, or fertilizers. So, it will grow in places where other cereals will not survive. In brief, fonio is a very easy grain and doesn’t need much. This aspect ensures that it can grow in less ideal vegetation. The cereal is so versatile. You can cook so much with it. On the one hand, you can make a salad of it, noodles or you can use it in baking. On the other hand, you can use fonio as the grain substitute in a classic meal.

However, processing fonio is a difficult and time-consuming task because of the extremely small size of the grain. One gram of fonio contains nearly 2000 grains and each egg-shaped grain is only about 1 - 1.5 mm long. To make fonio more competitive on the market in terms of quality and price, it is necessary to improve grain processing techniques at small company and women’s group level by modernizing existing and developing new equipment. The production of fonio grains keeps increasing and has reached over 600,000 tonnes per year. Fonio plays an important role in food security. In a time of climatic change, more lands become marginal and unsuitable for the cultivation of some major cereal crops.

In Senegal, the farm activities are gender-based. The men are in charge of the harvest, while most of the fonio processing is done by women. During the harvest, the women are singing revitalizing songs, to raise the boys’ morale and to keep them working in rhythm. At the end of the harvest, the same women are in charge of bringing the fonio back to the village where it will be transformed.

Fonio can make some changes in agriculture. It is an example of making some big changes in food production, water usage, the way we eat, and what we eat. It needs less water, and it will damage the earth less. The cultivation of fonio begins after the first rainfalls. They come around June or July. But in recent years, because of climate change, the rainfalls have been inconsistent.

Before consumption, fonio needs to be separated from its inedible hull. The tiny size of the fonio grains makes this operation laborious

It’s incredibly easy to cook, and difficult to get wrong.

In general, fonio offers enormous potential. It is just a super easy grain that gives so many possibilities and can solve a lot of problems.

# In this way the statement is confirmed, fonio is certainly a miracle grain!

**Bronnen**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yjtCDgjxRAw&feature=emb_logo&ab_channel=TED>

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