

The Significance of Urad Dal in Ancestor pujas

Urad Dal (Black Lentils)



Question:- What is the significance of the Urad Dal especially during Shraddha ceremonies and Pitra Paksha? Do we boil the Dal or can we braise it like normal Dal.

Answer:- We are going to furnish you with different points of views.

Historically and Health-wise:- Urad Dal has been in cultivation since ancient times and is one of the most highly prized pulses/lentils of India. It's very nutritious and is recommended for diabetics, as are other pulses. Though very beneficial in limited quantities excessive intake causes flatulence. Along with being a delicious food, it has enormous nutritive value. Exceptionally rich in proteins, it also has Vitamins B-thiamine, riboflavin and niacin; Vitamin C, iron, calcium, crude fibres and starch. Previously in India most Hindus were vegetarian, and protein had to be obtained from some type of food and Urad dal was found to have plenty of protein and the like, hence was used. One of the staple diets of our ancestors was Urad dal for this reason and with just one gram of fat you could see why they were so healthy and prolonged their lives. Each Indian town or village had Ayurvedic doctors who generally recommended Black gram (Urad Dal) for most types of illness and that's why our ancestors made Urad Dal one of their staple diets and they really enjoyed it, it seems. Hence the use of Black Gram (Urad Dal) is generally a must in Pitru (Ancestor) Food.

Black gram is full of vitamins, minerals dietary fibres and arrests cholesterol. Black gram has calcium, potassium, iron, magnesium, copper, manganese and so much more. Black gram contains lots of potassium and thus black gram can be considered as an aphrodisiac. Also the sodium potassium revoke hypertension and blood pressure when consumed. A one-cup of urad dal serving contains 189 calories, 13 grams of protein, 12 grams of fibre (about half a day's worth) and one gram of fat. Black gram requires only minimal soaking -- about half an hour -- before cooking, which takes another 30 to 40 minutes. In India, Urad dal are the common person's

meal. They're very popular and are eaten throughout India,

*** One can braise the dal or just boil it. It doesn't matter.

What is acceptable to cook and offer to one's ancestors during Pitr Paksha and Sharaddha pujas like 10th days, 13th days, 6th month and 11 and half months pujas.

*** Kindly note that research is still being carried out on this topic. The intention of this is to provide you with shastric-based information. The information that follows is based on what has already been researched.

The **Kurma Purana Uttara Bhaga, 19 Shraddha Prakarana** mentions, "The Pitars are highly satisfied with materials like **Vrihi** (sanskrit - food grains, rice SB 9.19.13) {I would suggested-ly advice cooking Basmati rice instead of parboiled rice}, **Yava** (barley), **Maasha (black urad dal, vigna mungo, black gram, black lentil)**, **Moolaa** (shatavari root – Ctrl-Click "**HERE**" to learn more), **Phalaa** (fruits esp. mango, grapes {draaksha}, pomegranate {anar}), **Wheat**, **Tilaa** (sesame seeds), and **Bhumi Kushmanda** (Ash gourd, white pumpkin, white gourd melon). Also the Pitars are pleased with offerings of honey and gur (a form of sugar) with fruits."

The 'pitars' become satisfied with pure vegetarian food, fruits and cereals. Pure and hygienic food should be offered with full devotion to our ancestors so that they become pleased and bestow their blessings of happiness, progress and remove family discords upon their descendents.

The **Mahabharata – Anusasana Parva, Book 13, Section 88** states, "Bhishma-deva said, 'O Yudhishtira, with sesame seeds and rice, barley, **Masha (black urad dal)**, water, roots and fruits, if offered during a Shraddha, the Pitris become satisfied".

Benefits of Urad Dal

1. Provides energy

Consuming urad dal regularly increases your energy significantly as it replenishes the body's iron reserves. This is particularly essential for women undergoing menstruation who have a higher chance of iron deficiency. Different from red meat and other iron sources, urad dal does not contain high calories and fat content. Iron is a vital haemoglobin component that transports oxygen to various body cells for metabolism and energy production.

2. Protein source

Urad dal is popular amongst vegetarians as it acts like a rich protein source. This makes these beans an inexpensive and tasty protein source, particularly for people who do not have sufficient money for regular meat consumption. Proteins are vital for muscle building and the overall development of the body.

3. Aids digestion

The best benefit of ingesting urad dal is that it enhances digestion because of its

rich fibre content. In fact, it boasts of the two kinds of dietary fibre including insoluble and soluble fibre. The soluble fibre normally quickens digestion while the insoluble fibre aids in preventing constipation and increasing stool bulk.

4. Boosts heart health

Aside from reducing cholesterol, black lentils also boost health. This advantage is linked to the rich magnesium and foliate levels that prevent damage to the arterial walls. In addition, magnesium boosts cardiovascular health through increasing blood circulation. Even though it is very useful in small quantities, consuming excessive amounts of urad dal can cause flatulence.

Black gram/ lentil is well known as urad dal in Hindi. In texts of Ayurveda this bean is well known as “**MASHA**”. The oldest known Ayurvedic texts are the Sushruta Samhita and the Charaka Samhita.

Do note 3 very important terminologies used in Ayurveda viz.

The 3 Dosha types:

1. **Vata Dosha** -- Energy that controls bodily functions associated with motion, including blood circulation, breathing, blinking, and your heartbeat.

- In balance: There is creativity and vitality.
- Out of balance: Can produce fear and anxiety.

2. **Pitta Dosha** -- Energy that controls the body's metabolic systems, including digestion, absorption, nutrition, and your body's temperature.

- In balance: Leads to contentment and intelligence.
- Out of balance: Can cause ulcers and anger.

3. **Kapha Dosha** -- Energy that controls growth in the body. It supplies water to all body parts, moisturizes the skin, and maintains the immune system.

- In balance: Expressed as love and forgiveness.
- Out of balance: Can lead to insecurity and envy.

According to texts of Ayurveda this bean is complicated to ready and increases the moistness of physique tissues. It's honeyed to ambience and prohibited in potency. All these properties assistance to normalize or ease debauched vata. Consumption of this bean increases kapha and pitta. Imbalanced vata dosha causes many diseases and also leads to group illness problems like erectile dysfunction, premature ejaculation, low spermatozoa equate and motility etc. Hence Ayurveda Acharyas (Guru's) suggest use of “masha” in many illness conditions.

The nutritional protein in Urad dal is comparable to the protein derived from animal sources, making Urad dal a good substitute for those who don't eat meat. Like other pulses, this black gram makes up for mineral deficiencies caused by a plain rice diet. According to Ayurveda, Urad is Madhur, Balya (gives strength), and is Vrishya (spermatogenic), Brihan (fattening), and is Stanya Janan (increase mothers milk). Ladoos made from Urad strengthen the nervous system, and the paste of Urad is used for massaging the body. Pharmacologically, extracts have demonstrated immunostimulatory activity.

Anti inflammatory properties: According to Ayurveda vitiation of vata causes inflammation of tissues and initiates the prodigy of pain."Masha" or urad dal normalizes vata and as a result has anti inflammatory properties. Usually a prohibited bandage of black gram is used in inflammation of joints and flesh pain. Massaging with herbal oil processed with this smashing herb helps to revoke suffering and inflammation

Nervous system disorders: This herb strengthens shaken system. Ayurveda Acharyas suggest preparations of this herb in shaken debility, prejudiced paralysis, facial stoppage and other disorders which engage shaken system.

Disorders of digestive system: Urad Dal helps to enlarge bulk of stools. The moistness augmenting skill joined with bulk augmenting peculiarity helps in easy transformation of bowel. Therefore use of this lentil is endorsed in conditions like constipation, piles and colic. This herb is a very good liver stimulant.

Action on masculine reproductive system: Texts of Ayurveda extol the aphrodisiac properties of black gram. It increases spermatozoa equate and spermatozoa motility (Increases peculiarity and apportion of semen). It's very in effective in erectile dysfunction (impotence) and premature ejaculation

Action on woman's reproductive system: This herb is in effect in Dysmenorrhea (painful periods) and Amenorrhea (absence of a menstrual period). It increases divert secretion in lactating mothers.

Apart from on top of referred to medicinal properties, black gram also helps in augmenting physique bulk and physique appetite level. It strengthens the physique and increases lifespan.

The most popular dishes of South Indian cuisines are Dosas, chutneys, and papads are all made of Urad dal. Indian preparations use ginger, garlic and spices like asafoetida not only to enhance taste, but also to make it more digestible.

Herbal home remedies

- Black gram or urad dal not only has health benefits but it also has some useful skin rejuvenating and nourishing properties.
- In ancient India, urad dal was used as beauty aid, especially as a scrub to massage the body.

A few herbal home remedies utilizing urad dal for various medicinal benefits are:

- A paste made out of soaked urad dal and almonds, is applied on face and kept for thirty minutes after which it is washed off. This is a useful remedy in nourishing the skin and removing the effects of unwanted tanning, thus improving complexion.
- Black gram flour along with green gram paste is an efficacious home remedy for strengthening the hair and treatment of dandruff.
- A decoction of black gram is widely used in India for promoter of digestive system. It is helpful in the cure of dyspepsia, gastric catarrh, dysentery and diarrhoea.
- A decoction of black gram boiled with sesame oil and rock salt is beneficial in rheumatic inflammations and knee contractions, when applied externally.

- Urad dal is fried in ghee till its colour changes to light brown, and then grinded to make a powder. 2 spoons of this powder mixed with a pinch of cardamom powder and sugar according to taste, if taken twice in a day (morning and night) helps in increasing the sperm count in males.
- Black gram is soaked in water for 6-7 hours, and then after soaking it is fried in ghee and eaten with honey is a remedy for sexual dysfunctions in males.
- 30 gram of washed urad dal fried in ghee and made into a pudding (kheer) with 300 ml of milk and sugar, if taken hot is efficacious in enhancing your sexual potency.
- Urad dal as a regular part of your diet is a great remedy in the treatment of erectile dysfunction in men.
- Germinated black gram, taken with a half a cupful of fresh bitter melon (karela) and a teaspoonful of honey, once a day for four months is helpful for diabetic patients. This should be taken with a restriction of carbohydrates in the diet.
- Black gram as regular part of the diet is known to strengthen a women's womb.
- In southern parts of India, dishes made of black gram and linseed are useful for delayed menarche (the first menstrual period), painful menstruation etc.

Traditional medicinal properties of Black gram

- Black gram is known to be a demulcent (is an agent that forms a soothing film over a mucous membrane, relieving minor pain and inflammation), aphrodisiac and a nerve tonic. It increases reproductive fluid, gives strength to body, increases lactation, and serves as an effective laxative.
- As per Ayurvedic texts it is effective in purish kshya (a state in which stool is not formed properly). It increases pitta and kapha dosha, while pacifies vata dosha.

A storehouse of energy

Urad dal or black gram has rich stores of iron while being low in calorie and fats. Since iron is a vital component of haemoglobin, it is essential for body's metabolism and energy production. It's especially good for menstruating women.

Muscle building

Black gram is a rich source of protein and hence helpful for the overall development of the body and in the strengthening and building of muscle mass.

Digestive aid

Urad dal is rich in fibre content and hence enhances digestion. It has both soluble and insoluble dietary fibres, thus serving the dual purpose of quickening the digestion process as well as in preventing constipation and increasing the bulk of the stool.

Good for heart

Black gram is helpful in reducing cholesterol. It boosts a healthy heart. It has rich content of magnesium and folate that prevents damage to the walls of the arterial walls. Magnesium boosts cardiovascular health through increasing blood circulation.

Cancer

- Urad dal is also known to fight against pancreatic cancer.
- Black gram is used in the prevention or treatment of a number of diseases.
- Urad dal is helpful in diabetics as it is low in glycemic index.
- It is used in the treatment of sexual dysfunction in males such as impotency, premature ejaculation, and thinness of semen.
- In the treatment of nervous disorders like nervous weakness, memory loss, schizophrenia, and hysteria.
- In the cure of rheumatic problems such as contracted knee and stiff shoulder.
- It is also associated with the treatment of cough and acidity in the body.
- It is considered a remedy for diseases like facial or partial body paralysis.

Drawbacks of excessive use of urad dal

Two points to remember while indulging your taste buds in urad dal are:

- It is high in purines, which is converted to uric acid. Accumulation of uric acid in the joints causes redness and inflammation consequently leading to arthritis and gout. So those with rheumatism or uric acid in urine should not consume urad dal too often.
- It causes flatulence; therefore it is recommended to add asafoetida, pepper, and ginger while preparing it for medicinal purposes to make its digestion better.

Home beauty tips using black gram

Urad dal pack for removing sunburns and tanning

Grind urad dal soaked overnight in water, mix with curd or yoghurt and applied to affected parts in the body for 15 minutes and then wash off. It can be repeated every alternate day.

Urad dal pack for back acne and prickly heat rashes

Masoor dal (red lentils) powder, urad dal powder and dried orange peel powder is mixed in equal quantities and made a paste with cucumber juice. Apply this on the affected area, leave it till dry and then wash off.

Urad dal hair pack for hair nourishment

Urad dal powder, egg yolk and lemon juice are mixed in yoghurt and applied on hair and left for 4 hours after which it is washed off. The hair are conditioned and nourished.

Urad dal hair pack for split ends

Grind urad dal with fenugreek seeds to a coarse powder and mix with curd or yoghurt and apply over the scalp. Wash the hair after 1-2 hours, and it is good for split ends.

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