

# NAVARA - THE MAGICAL RICE OF KERALA!!!



Rice is the primary staple food for more than 2 billion people in Asia, the world's most densely populated region, and for hundreds of millions of people in Africa and Latin America. It is reckoned that about 1,20,000 genetically distinct varieties of rice exist in the world today.

Kerala, often referred to as "God's own country", is bestowed with rich rice biodiversity and associated traditional

knowledge. Wayanad district, a hilly mountainous tract in the state had harbored around 100 odd traditional rice varieties until early part of 1980's. This rice genetic base of Wayanad has now narrowed down to 10 or 15 varieties. The rice cultivation area in the district has drastically reduced from 17304 ha (1999-2000) to 12988 ha (2002-2003). The rice genetic diversity of Wayanad is known for its uniqueness such as aromatic, medicinal, flood resistant, drought tolerant and so on, which have been carefully conserved by the farmers over generations.



## Support of the National Medicinal Plant Board for conservation and sustainable use of Navara

M.S.Swaminathan Research foundation with financial support of the National Medicinal Plant Board has undertaken a project (2004-2007) focusing the conservation and revitalization of Medicinal and Scented Rice Varieties of Kerala. Special attention has been laid on Navara- A UNIQUE RICE VARIETY OF KERALA that is known in cultivation since the early centuries.

Herbal healers quote Navara as "gold having aroma" and a paddy readily marketable at any season. Therefore it is being conserved largely as a homestead level crop with great sanctity and care. It is known as Shashtikam, Shashtikasali



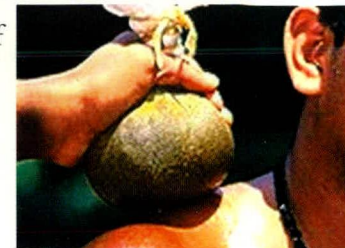
or Snighdathandulam in Ayurveda. Shastikam denotes sixty days and this peculiar rice variety has a life cycle of sixty days. In Ashtangahridaya, Navara is quoted as the best among the Vrihi (grains having red kernel) grains. Navara with its Brihmana (nourishing) quality helps to increase the growth of muscles and stimulates nerve endings.

## Experience the Healing Touch of Navara!!!

Kerala is the cradle of Ayurveda and traditional system of medicine and Navara is widely used in the traditionally much acclaimed herbal therapeutic systems since the time of Susruta, the ancient healer. Navara is renowned for its medicinal importance and popularly known in Ayurvedic treatments.

Navara is widely used for internal consumption as an efficient health food as well as for external application under Panchakarma treatment. Ayurvedic physicians use Navara for a wide range of ailments including rheumatism, arthritis, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, blood pressure and also for the relaxation and rejuvenation of weak muscles in aged.

**Navarakizhi:** It is the most popular treatment of Navara, widely used in Panchakarma Chikilza of Ayurveda. Navarakizhi is a kind of Pinda Svedam- a warm sweating treatment- in which the body is gently massaged with a linen bag containing Navara grains cooked in milk and a



herbal decoction of Kurumthotti (*Sida rhombifolia* var. *retusa*), after thorough application of oil (Sastikathailam/ Dhanvandarithailam/ Aswagandhadi) all over the body. This treatment is very effective for muscle wasting, nerve weakness, rheumatic complaints and reinvigorating the body.

**Navaratheppu:** Navara rice is applied as a paste on the body of the patients for a period of one or two hours. This treatment is used for patients who are weak and are not able to be exposed to Navarakizhi. It is highly recommended against tuberculosis.

**Shashtikathailam:** It is an oil prepared from Navara bran and is used in nervous diseases, body aches, numbness, spondilitis and wasted muscles due to polio myelites, myopathies and motor neuron diseases.

## Suitable Alternative Rice for Health for All - Young and Old!!!

Navara is widely used at household level for a broad range of health concerns.

- A cure for haemorrhoids
- A cure for urinary complaints
- A cure for stomach ulcer
- A cure for polio
- A muscle builder
- An aphrodisiac

According to traditional beliefs and experiences Navara rice is very nutritious, balanced and safe diet for people of all ages and is considered as a natural energizer.

**Marannukanji/ Mukkudikanji:** It is a rice gruel made of Navara along with few spices like fenugreek and medicinal herbs such as Mukkutti, Kadaladi, Karuka, Vishnukranthi, Valliuzhinja and Nilappana and is considered as the best dish to prevent various diseases during the monsoon season. Navara rice is also recommended as a safe food for diabetic patients.

## What is special about Navara?

Navara is considered as "God's precious gift to the God's own country". According to Hindu beliefs, Navara represents Aditya, the Sun God: All parts of Navara are medicinal in one way or the other- the grains are widely used against various ailments in Ayurveda; the roots are used against diabetes, strangury, bilious fever and also against Panchabhoota vibhranti including epilepsy, mental disorders. The straw of Navara is used as a bed for patients suffering from rheumatic disorders.



**Nutritious baby Food:** New born babies are fed with a dish called angri made of Navara flour and dried powder of Kunnan banana in Calicut district of Kerala. Mothers vouch that it is a safe and nutritious food for children.

**Paalkanji:** Regular consumption of a rice gruel made in cow's milk added with sugar ensures longevity. Paalkanji is also fed to children.

**Payasam:** Consumption of Payasam- a sweet dish made of Navara rice in jaggery and ghee increases mother's milk.

## Experience the Nourishing Taste of Navara!!!

Navara is now no more confined to the four walls of Ayurveda. Several value added products are prepared from Navara and are finding its place in the market. Some of the Navara products are:

**Navdhanyapodi/ Nutrivita:** A protein rich food made from Nine grains which include Navara, Ragi, Maize, Wheat, Horse gram, Green gram, Groundnut, Sorghum and Barley. It is highly recommended for pregnant women, babies and diabetic patients.

**Baby Vita:** A nutritious baby food prepared from Navara and banana powder.

Apart from these Navara Pappad, Navara Puttu, Navara Dosa and Navara Uniappam are also prepared.

## Navara : A High Remunerative Rice

Though the productivity of the crop is low the cost benefit analysis of Navara reveals the fact that Navara fetches a comparatively reasonable and consistently 3-4 times higher price than any other ordinary rice variety. The current market value of 1kg of Navara rice is Rs. 25-30 and rice grain is Rs.45-50 in many localities of Kerala, whereas an ordinary rice fetches a mere value of Rs.5-6 and 12-20 rupees respectively. Apart from the above there is an increasing pharmaceutical demand for original Navara rice.



Navara Golden (Awnless)



Navara Golden (Awned)



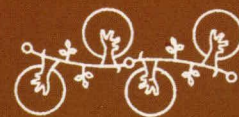
Navara Black (Awnless)



Navara Black (Awned)

## How is Navara identified from other paddy grains?

Navara is unique from other rice varieties by being a short duration crop. Two kind of morphologically distinguishable ecotypes exist in Navara- Gold (awned and awnless) and Black (awned and awnless). It is an erect annual grass with very weak tillers (7-8) that are highly prone to lodging. Grains are narrowly ellipsoid to oblong, light in weight, slender, 7-8.5mm long and 4.5-4.8mm wide, shattering moderately high and easily threshable. The presence of methionine a sulphur containing aminoacid may be the reason for its medicinal property.



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# Navara

*A medicinal rice for health and rejuvenation*



*Nurtured by Farmers and Herbal Healers of Kerala*