

Improving your nutrients!



Two easy ways to improve the nutrients in your food is by **Fermenting** or **Germinating**—these methods either create nutrients or allow nutrients to be absorbed better by the body. Because these methods are already used in Malawi, they are easy ways to use more!

* Fermenting *

In addition to creating nutrients & having better absorption, fermenting helps to preserve the food. The acid made during fermentation discourages bacteria from growing. Fermenting can be done with grains, starchy roots, or beans. The food is cleaned and soaked for 2-3 days until fermentation is seen.

Important note: The fermenting that we want for improved nutrition is just enough to produce a sour tasting acid, it is NOT the lengthy fermenting used to make alcohol! To learn more on fermenting, ask in the village.

* Germinating *

The following was adapted from the booklet Food for People Living with HIV/AIDS which was made by NAPHAM—The National Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS in Malawi

Sprouts are germinating seeds. A germinating seed is one that is starting to grow into a new plant. You can sprout grains, legumes, and edible seeds. Sprouting increases vitamins, minerals, protein, and live enzymes in food. Sprouts are quicker to cook than a dried grain or legume and even better, they can be eaten raw, which saves the most fuel and gives the most nutrients. Growing sprouts: Clean & soak the grain, bean, or edible seed. Drain the seed—this water will be full of nutrients, so use it in cooking or put it on your plants. There are *at least* two ways to continue from here...

In the traditional method, pile these soaked seeds on a lichero (flat woven basket) and cover them with banana leaves or other similar covering. Leave them in a shady spot until they sprout. Or you can put the soaked seeds in a jar that has a wide mouth or some similar container. Cover the mouth of the jar with mesh and secure tightly with string or a rubber band. Place the jar in a dark place with the mouth down at an angle so that water can continue to drain and air can enter. In this method you need to rinse the sprouts twice a day, morning and evening. If it is very hot, rinse more often.

Which ever way you choose, you can use the following chart as a guide for soaking and time to leave until ready because seeds have different germination rates and are different sizes.

Type of seed	Amount seed per jar	Time to soak seeds	Approximate time until ready	Length of sprout when ready
Alfalfa / grass seeds	3-4 Tablespoons	4 hours	4-6 days	3 cm
Common Beans	1 cup	12 hours	4-7 days	1 cm
Smaller Beans	1 cup	12 hours	2-5 days	1 cm
Sorghum or Millet	1 cup	8 hours	2-3 days	½ cm
Sunflower	1 cup	12 hours	1-3 days	½ cm
Groundnuts	1 cup	12 hours	1-2 days	½ cm

Causes of spoiled sprouts can include—

bad seed, not rinsing enough, too much heat, unclean water, too much moisture, or not enough air.

The best teacher is often an older person in the village—ask an elder!