

# PROUDLY SOUTH AFRICAN FOODS

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## INTRODUCTION

South Africa is a beautiful country filled with many natural wonders: From our unique flora and fauna to our picturesque landscapes to the melting pot of cultures that make up our people. But I take the most pride in South Africa's food. There are so many different foods indigenous to our cuisine and as a dietician, I've picked out some of my favourites.

## SORGHUM MEAL

Maize is one of the country's most popular staple foods. It's eaten in different forms: crumbly phutu pap, braai pap and soft porridge. I don't want to dwell on a food we know, I want to talk more about its lesser known counterpart: sorghum pap. Sorghum is a grain that grows all over the world. It comes in a range of colours from light yellow to red<sup>1</sup>.

In South Africa, the Basotho are the main consumers of sorghum. They prepare it by grinding the sorghum grain and then fermenting it. They make a porridge named "ting" from the fermented sorghum. The porridge has a sour taste, similar to that of yoghurt<sup>1,2</sup>.



Sorghum is great tasting, gluten-free and low-fat. One cup contains 12g of high grade fibre, a whopping 21g of protein, a substantial amount of iron and B-vitamins - including thiamine.

## MOPANE WORMS

Did you just read worms? Yes, you did. The mopane worm is the caterpillar form of the emperor moth. It's named after the mopane tree, on which it is found. Mopane worms can be consumed dry - as a snack, like crisps - or cooked, as a source of protein<sup>4</sup>.



For the people of Limpopo, mopane worms are a staple, every day food. But they have become a delicacy in the rest of the country's cosmopolitan hubs.

By eating 100g (one cup) of mopane worms, a 35-year-old woman can expect to get:

- Three times more protein than from beef;
- A good source of essential amino acids tryptophan and lysine;
- 31mg iron (172% of the recommended daily amount for women, 115% if pregnant)
- 14mg zinc (175% of the recommended daily amount)
- 543mg phosphorus (78% of the recommended daily amount)
- Potassium, calcium and magnesium<sup>4,5</sup>

Another interesting fact about mopane worms is that they are a source of fibre. The exoskeleton of the worm contains chitin. Chitin is a protein that cannot be digested and thus works in a similar way to the fibre found in fruit. It adds bulk to the diet and is passed in stool<sup>4,5</sup>.

## AFRICAN SPINACH

African spinach is more fondly known as “morogo” in Sesotho or Sepedi. The Zulus refer to it as “imifino” and in Tshivenda, it is “muroho”. It includes a collection of over 100 different types of edible “leafy greens” that have been part of the South African diet for millions of years<sup>6</sup>.

With the name “African spinach,” you would be forgiven for expecting it to look like spinach, but many varieties don't. Morogo can be prepared in a variety of ways. Some people add tomato and some variants go well with ground nuts. It goes well with maize meal pap. Morogo is rich in countless micro-nutrients including iron, calcium, vitamins A and C and even omega-3s. Some even produce seeds, which can be considered a complete protein. Morogo can be made up of as much as 36% protein<sup>6,7</sup>.





## YUMMIES TO HAVE IN MODERATION

There are two popular South African dishes that need to be eaten in moderation. These are chicken feet and mogodu, or tripe stew. Apart from providing a cheaper source of protein, these can be high in fat, especially cholesterol. If you have a taste for these delicacies, I suggest using a healthy cooking method such as boiling and avoid adding oil.

## CONCLUSION

South Africa has a wide variety of foods that are nutritious. You can eat healthily with locally found foods and get a variety of nutrients from eating dishes like “ting” and “morogo”. If you don’t eat them already, give them a try - you may be pleasantly surprised.

### WHERE DOES FUTURELIFE® FIT IN?

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## REFERENCES:

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FUTURELIFE® KIDS Smart Food™, and FUTURELIFE® KIDS Smart Oats® are specially formulated with the extra vitamins and minerals younger children need. FUTURELIFE® HIGH ENERGY Smartfood provides older children with 50% of their vitamins and minerals per serving.