A Note on Favism

Although commonly consumed in both ancient and modern times, fava beans can cause an allergic-like reaction in certain people, causing certain cultures in the ancient world to consider it an undesirable crop. This hereditary disorder is named favism and comes from the meaning “occurrence after consumption of fava beans” in Greek «κύαμοι», (“kyamoi”) (Meletis & Konstantopoulos, 2004). Favism is common among people from Mediterranean, Southeast Asia, and Northern African regions. Favism is a reaction to any part of the ingested fava plant; beans, pods, foliage, and even inhalation of the pollen. Although typically resulting in a minor reaction, Favism can lead to hemolytic anemia with excessive exposure to large quantities, so if you have never tried them please begin with a smaller portion size.

Fava Bean pods and some freshly shelled raw beans.

Agricultural Sustainability

The cultivation of the fava bean is beneficial for both the environment and the economy. The fava bean relies very little on nitrogen; through the symbiotic relationship of nitrogen fixation it can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increases soil fertility. Nitrogen fixation is defined as a process of combining atmospheric nitrogen with other elements, by chemical means or by bacterial action; used primarily in the production of fertilizers and other industrial products. (“Nitrogen Fixation”, 2020). Cover crops possess an important role in erosion control, weed control, soil conservation and soil health. Through sensible selection and management, cover crops are suitable for any crop rotation or cropping system, such as no-till farming, and are vital to organic farming.

References

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Farmer planting sprouted fava beans.

HAVE YOU HEARD OF FAVA BEANS?

A brief description of the benefits of this tasty bean.

What is the Fava bean?

Fava bean, broad bean, horse bean, or faba, is a species of flowering plant in the pea and bean family *Fabaceae*. The origin is uncertain, and it is widely cultivated as a crop for human consumption internationally. Fava beans are one of the oldest domesticated legumes and are used as a cover crop. Fava beans have a long history of cultivation in old world agriculture, being among the most ancient plants in cultivation and also among the easiest to grow. Fava beans are believed to have become part of the eastern Mediterranean diet around 6000 BCE or earlier. They are still often grown as a cover crop to prevent erosion because they can overwinter and, as a legume, they fix nitrogen in the soil.

Fava bean pods on the stalk.

Nutritive Properties

One ½ cup serving of fava bean provide over one third of one's daily requirement of protein intake making them appealing to those who eat only plant-based sources of protein. Since fava beans are high in protein and fiber this legume is satiating. Fava beans contain polyphenols which are protective for the human body. Polyphenols are reducing agents. Together with other dietary reducing agents, referred to as antioxidants, such as vitamin C and E as well as carotenoids; protect the body's tissues against oxidative stress and associated pathologies such as cancers, coronary heart disease, and inflammation (Tapiero et al., 2002).

Macro and Micro Nutrient Content (per cup/150 grams)	**Amount**
Calories	512 j
Protein	39.2 g
Carbohydrate	87.4 g
Fat	2.3 g
Fiber	37.5 g
Calcium, Ca	154 mg
Iron, Fe	10 mg
Magnesium, Mg	288 mg
Phosphorus, P	632 mg
Potassium, K	1590 mg
Sodium, Na	19.5 mg
Zinc, Zn	4.71 mg
Copper, Cu	1.24 mg
Manganese, Mn	2.44 mg
Selenium, Se	12.3 µg
Vitamin C	2.1 mg
Thiamin	0.832 mg
Riboflavin	0.5 mg
Niacin	4.25 mg
Pantothenic Acid	1.46 mg
Vitamin B-6	0.549 mg
Folate, total	634 µg

"Only ½ cup provide about 1/3 of your daily protein requirement"

Baghali Polo (Fava, Rice, Dill)

- 2 cups extra-long basmati rice
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup chopped fresh dill or 1/4 cup dried dill
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 8 ounces fava beans or lima beans (frozen, cooked and peeled)
- 2 tablespoons butter

Three steps cooking

1. Combine the rice, salt, olive oil and 3 cups water in a medium pot with a lid over high heat. Bring the water to a boil, and let it bubble, uncovered, until the water evaporates. (When the water is all gone, the rice should be about half-cooked.) Turn the heat to low.
2. Add the fresh or dried dill and the garlic powder, and stir with a fork. Spread the beans out over the top of the rice, cover the pot and cook until the rice is tender, about 15 minutes.
3. Turn off the heat, add the butter, cover the pot and let sit for 2 to 3 minutes, or until the butter melts. Taste and adjust the seasoning, and serve

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Cooked Fava Beans (Baghali)

- 2 pounds fresh fava beans in pods (or dry beans)
- Salt
- 1-2 tablespoons angelica powder, found in Middle Eastern grocery stores
- 1-2 freshly squeezed lemon juice

Four steps cooking

1. For fresh pods, remove the beans from pod and place in a large pot. Pour enough water to cover all the beans. For dry beans, soak the beans for few hours then start cooking
2. Bring the water to a boil and reduce the heat to medium-low and cook for about 50 minutes or until beans are thoroughly cooked. Add salt to taste in the last 10-15 minutes of cooking.
3. Drain the water, let it cool a few minutes and remove the thick outer layer.
4. Serve warm on a platter with angelica powder, lemon/lime juice and salt.