

## Full Length Research Paper

# Synthesis of high quality complementary food from locally available crops

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Accepted 10 February, 2017

Complementary foods of high nutrient qualities are expected to be given to infants in order to maintain their healthy status as they gradually transit from breastfeeding to family food. This study was aimed at producing high quality complementary food from locally available crops. Acha (*Digitaria exilis*), soybean (*Glycine max*) and sesame (*Sesamun indicum* L.) seeds were cleaned separately of dirt and extraneous materials. The acha grains were malted by steeping, germinating (72 h), drying (60°C, 20 h), desprouting, dehulling, milling and sieving. Soybean was soaked, dehulled, boiled, dried and milled while sesame seeds were soaked, acetic acid treated, rinsed, dehulled, dried, defatted, re-dried and milled. Complementary food blends were formulated at various ratios from malted and unmalted acha, full fat soybean and defatted sesame flours. The formulations produced were assessed for chemical composition and functional properties. The results showed that protein of the malted blends ranged from 7.68 – 21.68%, the energy ranged between 358.45- 433.30 kcal. The bulk density, water absorption and swelling capacities were lower in the malted blends. The viscosity of malted blends (< 2,550 Cps) was significantly lower ( $p < 0.05$ ) by LSD test than the values for unmalted blends (> 6,000 Cps). The supplementation with both soybean and sesame flours increased the protein, fat and ash contents of the blends while malting improved the consistency of the diet. The malted blends formed free flowing gruels which will aid consumption in infants.

**Key words:** Infants, malting, milling, protein, viscosity, water absorption.

## INTRODUCTION

The use of traditional staples such as cereal as a source of complementary food for infants that are weaned from

breast milk is well recognized (Fashakin and Ogunsola, 1982; Gopaldas et al., 1988; Onofioko and Nnanyelugo,

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1998; Ikujenlola, 2004). However, there is an inherent problem associated with the utilization of these staple foods as complementary food and this lies in the inability of the staples to satisfactorily supply all the necessary nutritional requirements of the fast growing infants. Plant proteins are regarded as incomplete proteins because it is deficient in one or two essential amino acids. Such limiting amino acids are required for optimum growth and healthy living. Cereals like maize, wheat, barley, acha (hungry rice), millet and sorghum lack lysine as the first limiting amino acid and in some cases tryptophan as the second limiting amino acids. These essential amino acids cannot be synthesized at reasonable quantity by the body (Bressani and Elias, 1974; FAO, 1992).

In addition to the problem of essential nutrients there are also the problems of bulkiness and processing of the traditional weaning food which often lead to leaching or depletion of protein and nutrients from the resulting gruel. Adeyemi (1989) reported that fermented maize contain less than 0.5% protein after processing to maize gruel (Ogi). Meanwhile, the problem of dietary bulk has been solved using various processing methods which include malting. Malting is controlled germination of grains during which biochemical reactions take place which leads to break down of polymers to smaller units. During the process of malting or germination an inherent enzyme is activated and this enzyme has been associated with the reduction in the high dietary bulk of malted flours. The enzyme alpha amylase which converts insoluble starch to soluble sugars, resulting in a thinning effect, is an important nutritional effect of germination (Murugkar et al., 2013; Ikujenlola et al., 2013).

Fortified nutritious commercial complementary foods are unavailable especially in the rural areas and where available, they are often too expensive and beyond the reach of most families in Nigeria. FAO/WHO/UNICEF (1971) emphasized the use of local foods formulated in the home and guided by the following principles: (i) high nutritional value to supplement breastfeeding (ii) acceptability (iii) low price (iv) use of local food items (Dewey and Brown, 2003).

Acha (*Digitaria exilis*) is in abundance in the northern part of Nigeria and scanty information is available as regards its utilization in complementary food formulations. Acha contain about 7% crude protein that is high in leucine (9.8%), methionine (5.6%) and valine (5.8%). It is believed that its methionine content is twice as high as that of egg protein (Temple and Bassa, 1991; Ballogou et al., 2013). Because of the nutritional value, Acha is highly recommended for diabetic patients by doctors (Philip and Itodo, 2006). Acha like other cereal lacks lysine.

The proteins of soy bean and sesame are considered to be rich sources of lysine and their major deficiency lies in the sulphur containing amino-acids methionine and cysteine. The amino acids profile of legumes and oil seeds placed them as natural complements to cereal

based diets.

This study was aimed at producing diets that can satisfactorily meet the need of the growing infants especially in the northern part of Nigeria where Acha, soy bean and sesame are abundant. Therefore, this study was designed to produce malted and unmalted complementary foods from blends of acha, soy and sesame flours and to assess the chemical and functional characteristics of the complementary foods.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The acha (*D. exilis*) used was purchased from the Jos Market, Jos Nigeria. Soybean and sesame seeds were bought from Owo central market, Owo, Nigeria.

### Production of malted acha flour

The method described by Marero et al. (1988) was adopted in the production of malted acha. The grains were cleaned in tap water and steeped in water (1:3) for 8 h. It was spread evenly (1.5 cm depth) in a germinating chamber for 72 h with constant watering to maintain its moisture content. The resulting green malt was dried in cabinet dryer at 60°C for 20 h, this was later desprouted, conditioned, dehulled, milled and sieved (Figure 1). The unmalted acha flour was produced according to the method reported by Obayanju and Ikujenlola (2002).

### Production of soybean and sesame flours

The soybean and sesame flours were produced according to the methods of Obayanju and Ikujenlola (2002) and Kulkarni et al. (1989) respectively. Figure 1 gives the flow chart of the unit operations involved in the production of the various flours.

### Formulations of the blends

The flours (malted and unmalted acha, soybean and sesame) were formulated into various blends using the following ratios shown in Table 1.

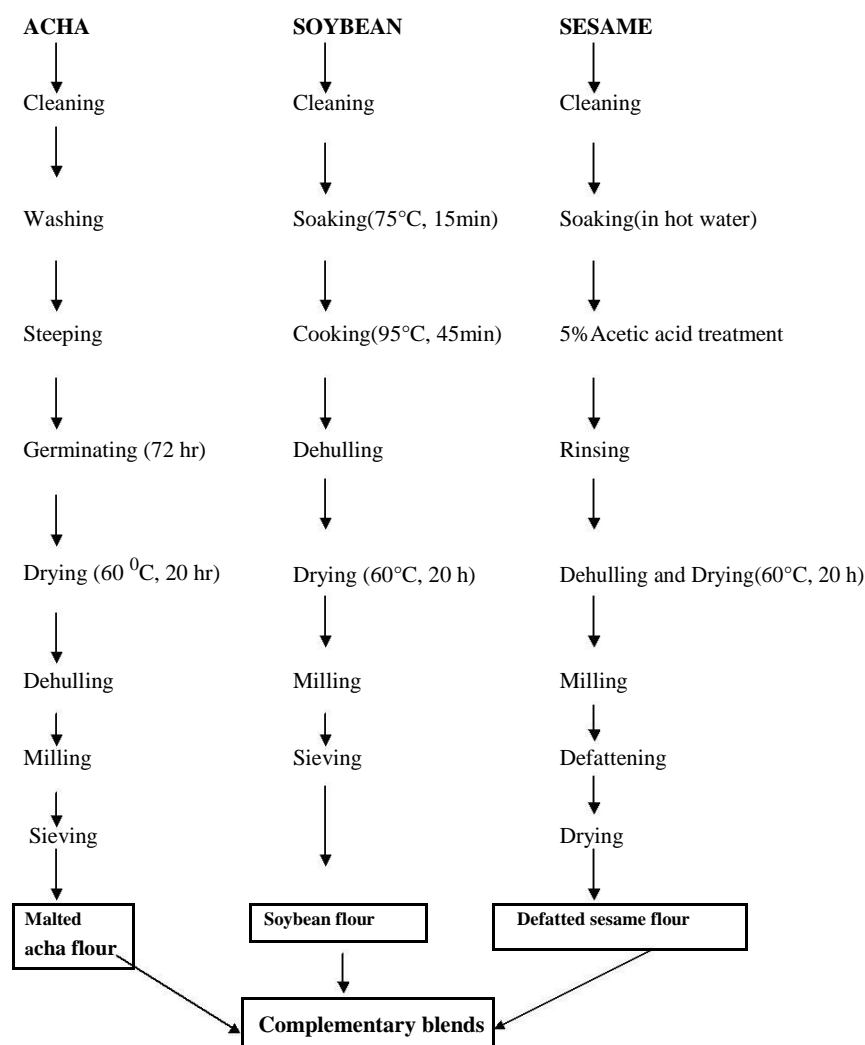
### Determinations of proximate composition

The proximate compositions of the blends (protein, fat, ash, crude fibre and moisture) were determined by using the standard methods of AOAC (2004). Carbohydrate was determined by difference and energy value was determined by calculation using the relationship described by Osborne and Voogt (1978) (1 g protein, 1 g carbohydrate and 1 g fat were multiplied by factors 4, 4 and 9 kcal, respectively).

### Determination of functional properties

The functional properties of the blends were assessed by determining the values of these parameters - bulk density, water absorption capacity, oil absorption capacity and viscosity.

The bulk density of each of the flours was determined by the



**Figure 1.** The production of complementary blends from acha, soybean and sesame flours.

**Table 1.** Various complementary blends (%).

Sample	Acha	Soybean	Sesame
Unmalted A	100	-	-
Unmalted B	70	30	-
Unmalted C	70	20	10
Malted A	100	-	-
Malted B	70	30	-
Malted C	70	20	10

method described by Okaka and Potter (1979). The water holding and oil absorption capacities were determined using the methods reported by Agrawal et al. (2013). The method described by Ikujenlola and Fashakin (2005) was used in the determination of the viscosity of the blends.

#### Statistical analysis

The data were expressed as means of three determinations. Data were analysed at the 0.05 level for one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test. The level of significance test was determined using

**Table 2.** Proximate composition of the blends (%).

Sample	Fat	Protein	Ash	Crude fibre	Moisture	Carbohydrate	Energy (kcal)
Malted A	3.45 <sup>e</sup>	7.68 <sup>d</sup>	3.45 <sup>b</sup>	2.75 <sup>c</sup>	8.50 <sup>b</sup>	74.17 <sup>a</sup>	358.45 <sup>e</sup>
Malted B	13.15 <sup>c</sup>	16.23 <sup>b</sup>	4.10 <sup>a</sup>	2.20 <sup>c</sup>	7.65 <sup>b</sup>	56.67 <sup>c</sup>	409.95 <sup>c</sup>
Malted C	18.10 <sup>a</sup>	21.68 <sup>a</sup>	4.00 <sup>a</sup>	2.05 <sup>c</sup>	8.25 <sup>b</sup>	45.92 <sup>e</sup>	433.30 <sup>a</sup>
Unmalted A	3.95 <sup>e</sup>	7.23 <sup>d</sup>	4.25 <sup>a</sup>	2.50 <sup>c</sup>	9.00 <sup>a</sup>	73.07 <sup>a</sup>	356.75 <sup>e</sup>
Unmalted B	12.20 <sup>c</sup>	13.25 <sup>c</sup>	3.90 <sup>ab</sup>	2.15 <sup>c</sup>	8.75 <sup>ab</sup>	59.75 <sup>c</sup>	401.80 <sup>d</sup>
Unmalted C	15.35 <sup>b</sup>	17.90 <sup>b</sup>	4.20 <sup>a</sup>	3.50 <sup>b</sup>	7.50 <sup>b</sup>	51.55 <sup>d</sup>	415.95 <sup>b</sup>
Commercial diet -control	9.00 <sup>d</sup>	16.00 <sup>b</sup>	2.00 <sup>c</sup>	5.00 <sup>a</sup>	4.00 <sup>c</sup>	64.00 <sup>b</sup>	401.00 <sup>d</sup>

Means of the same column followed by different letters are significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) by LSD test.

the Fisher's least significance difference (LSD) test and Duncan's multiple range test using SAS program (SAS Institute Inc., Cary NC, USA 2002-2003).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Chemical compositions of the complementary blends

The chemical compositions of the formulated blends are presented in Table 2. The major nutrients of the blends are protein, fat and carbohydrate. The protein content of the products ranged between 7.23 and 21.08%. The protein contents of unmalted and malted acha were 7.23 and 7.68%, respectively. The addition of soy bean and sesame flour to both unmalted and malted acha led to increase in the protein content of the products. For malted complementary blends, the protein ranged between 16.23 - 21.08% while it was 13.25 - 17.90% for unmalted complementary blends. The protein content compared favourably with the results of Omeire (2013) and Olapade and Aworh (2012) who produced diets from acha with boiled soy and coconut; and extruded acha with cowpea respectively. Legume and oil seeds contain protein of high essential amino acids (Iwe, 2003; Kaga et al., 2002; Robellen et al., 1989). Babies and growing children require protein of high quality in order to prevent the occurrence of protein malnutrition which is responsible for stunting growth.

The fat content of the malted blends ranged between 3.45 and 18.10% while the unmalted blends ranged between 3.85 and 15.35%. The addition of both soy and sesame increased the level of fat in blends. These values were higher than the values reported by Anigo et al. (2010) for blends of guinea corn, soybean and groundnut. Flours of high fat content supply higher energy value. However, food containing high fat is susceptible to both hydrolytic and oxidative/enzymatic rancidity which are responsible for off flavour. This affects both the general acceptability and storage stability of the products. Due to the high fat content of some the products, it should be

used shortly after production in order to prevent deterioration as a result of rancidity.

The ash content of the blends ranged from 3.34 - 4.10% (malted blends) and 3.90 - 4.25% (unmalted blends). The ash content of the products is higher than the 2% ash of the control. This range is higher than the ash content of fermented popcorn- African locust bean-bambara ground-nut blends (FPAB) ( $0.85 \pm 0.01$  g/100 g) but lower than  $6.07 \pm 1.24$  g/100 g for fermented popcorn-African locust bean blends (FPA) reported by Ijarotimi and Keshinro (2013). The ash content is directly related to the mineral composition of the blends. The crude fibre of the blends ranged from 2.05- 3.50% for the all the products. These values were lower than that of the control (5.00%) but higher than the fibre of maize gruel 'Ogi' (0.85%) reported by Ijarotimi and Keshinro (2013). World Health Organization recommends crude fibre below 5% for infants (FAO/WHO, 1991). The carbohydrate ranged between 45.92 - 74.17%. The carbohydrate content of the malted blends was lower than the unmalted samples. The energy content of the products ranged from 358.45 - 433.30 kcal (malted) and 356.75 - 415.95 kcal (unmalted). These values compared favourably with that of the control (401.00 kcal). FAO/WHO (1991) recommends a range of 400 - 435 kcal/100 g. Adequate energy is required for optimum development and growth of infants; this will promote normal growth and prevent energy malnutrition. The moisture content of malted and unmalted formulated diets were below 10%. The recommended moisture content for infant food according to FAO/WHO (1991) is less than 5%. These results compared favourably with the commercial weaning food sold in Nigeria and the results agree with the earlier reports of Obatolu and Cole (2000) and Ajanaku et al. (2012) who worked on similar complementary foods.

### Functional properties of the formulated diets

The bulk densities of the malted and unmalted samples

**Table 3.** Functional properties of complementary blends.

Sample	Malted A	Malted B	Malted C	Unmalted A	Unmalted B	Unmalted C	Commercial diet-Control
Bulk density (g/ml)	0.65	0.50	0.51	0.75	0.70	0.65	0.60
Water absorption capacity (%)	110.00	115.00	113.00	125.00	125.00	150.00	140.00
Swelling capacity (%)	115.00	110.00	120.00	130.00	145.00	165.00	145.00
Oil absorption capacity (%)	135.00	130.00	135.00	120.00	120.00	125.00	130.00

are presented in Table 3. The bulk densities ranged between 0.51 and 0.75 g/ml. The lowest value (0.51 g/ml) was recorded for the malted sample while the highest value (0.75 g/ml) was recorded for the unmalted sample. The bulk density of the control (commercial diet) was 0.60 g/ml. According to Ikujenlola and Fashakin (2005) and Onesmo (2011) malting promotes development of hydrolytic enzymes with high activity; modifies endosperm and converts stored starch to dextrin and simple sugars. Desikarchar (1980) reported that malting process is useful in the preparation of low bulk weaning foods. Low bulk density food is desired where packaging is a serious problem.

Water absorption capacities of the samples ranged between 110.00-115.00% (malted) and 125.00 - 150.00% (unmalted) and swelling capacities ranged between 110.00 -115.00% (malted) and 130.00-165.00% (unmalted). The water absorption capacity of the control was 140.00% and the swelling capacity was 145.00%. The trend of these results agrees with the report of Agrawal et al. (2013) who worked on malted foxtail and millet.

Water absorption and swelling capacities of the malted samples were lower than the values for the unmalted samples. The water absorption capacity relate to the amount of water available for gelatinization. Malting according to the reports of Marero et al. (1988), Kulkarni et al. (1989), Mensah and Tomkins (2003) and Ikujenlola and Adurotoye (2014) lowers water absorption capacity of malted flour. Lower water absorption capacity is desirable for producing a thinner gruels or porridges for children. Gruels of low water absorption capacity will allow addition of more solid, this will invariably increase the level for increase total solid. Swelling capacity of the sample determines the ability of the sample to absorb a particular amount of water and retain same within the period under study. From this result, the process of malting led to the reduction of both water absorption and swelling capacities.

The oil absorption capacities of the sample ranged from 130.00 - 135.00% (malted) and 120.00 - 125.00% (unmalted). The oil absorption capacities (Table 3) of the malted samples were higher than the unmalted complementary blends. Germination increased the capacity of acha flour to bind oil. This observation agrees with the reports of Narayana and Narasinga (1984), Ikujenlola (2004), Agrawal

et al. (2013). However, this observation is at variance with the report of Obatulo and Cole (2000).

Viscosity is the measure of the resistance of fluid to flow. Food is visco-elastic in nature. Weaning or complementary food of high viscosity is usually unacceptable to infants, it makes feeding taskful and causes choking-/suffocation. The malted blends gave lower viscosity (<2,250 cps) than the unmalted and the control samples (>10,550cps) (Figure 2). The viscosities of malted blends were significantly lower ( $p<0.05$ ) than those of unmalted blends. The consistencies (Table 4) of the malted blends were soft and free flowing as compared to the high viscous and thick consistency of the unmalted blends. The low hot paste viscosity of the malted samples was as a result of the activity of the amylase enzyme activated during malting which dextrinifies the starch molecule of the grain to dextrin. With low viscosity infant can easily consume as much food as possible. More solid can be added to the mixture; this will increase the nutrient density of the gruels which is highly beneficial to the infants. The reports of Desikarchar (1980), Marero et al. (1988), Kulkarni et al. (1989), Uvere et al. (2002), Sajilata et al. (2002) and Ikujenlola and Adurotoye (2014) show that malting process is valuable in reducing the viscosity of infants' gruels, increase total solid and nutrient density of such food.

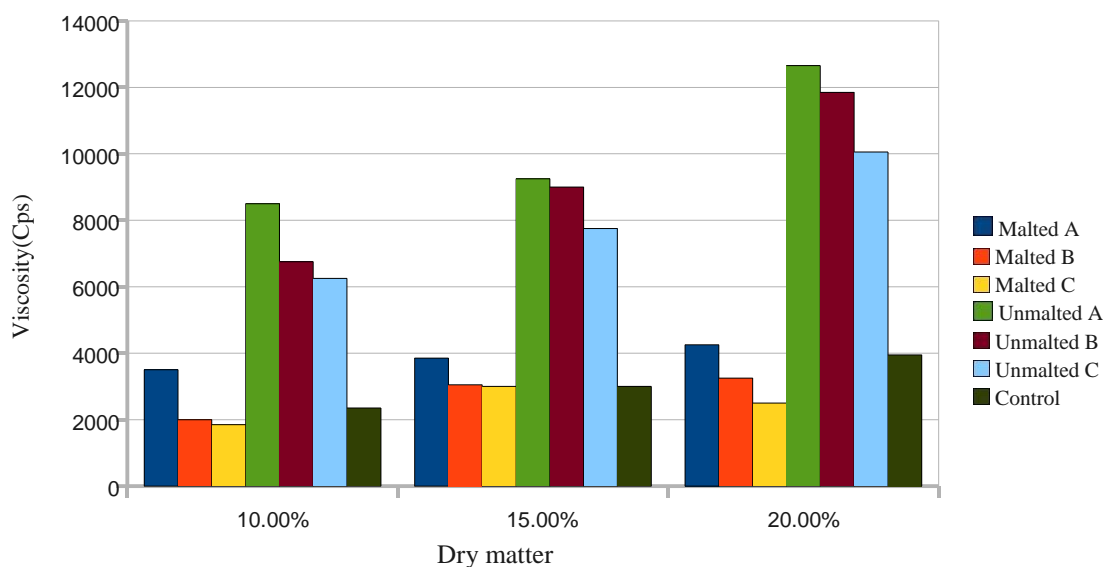
## Conclusion

The study successfully produced complementary foods of good chemical and functional characteristics from locally available raw materials (acha, soy and sesame). It could be concluded that malting improved the chemical composition of the products and the addition of soy and sesame further enhanced the chemical composition of the blends. Moreover, the malting reduced the viscosity and the water absorption capacity of the products which is advantageous to the infant and will make feeding easier.

## Conflict of interests

The authors did not declare any conflict of interests.





**Figure 2.** Viscosities of the various blends.

**Table 4.** Consistency of the blends.

Dry matter	Malted A	Malted B	Malted C	Unmalted A	Unmalted B	Unmalted C	Control (Nutrend)
10%	Free flowing	Free flowing	Free flowing	Free flowing	Free flowing	Free flowing	Free flowing
15%	Free flowing	Free flowing	Free flowing	Spoonful	Spoonful	Spoonful	Spoonful
20%	Free flowing	Free flowing	Free flowing	Paste like	Paste like	Paste like/viscous	Spoonful

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