

Summary

Traditional fermented foods are popularly consumed and form an integral part of our diet since early history. India is traditionally rich in fermented foods. In the Indian sub-continent, fermented food using local food crops and other biological resources are very common. But the nature of the products and base material varies from region to region. Fermented foods such as idli and dahi were described as early as 700 BC. At present, there are hundreds of fermented foods with different base materials and preparation methodology. Each fermented food is associated with a unique group of microbiota, which increases the level of proteins, vitamins, essential amino acids and fatty acids. However, fermented foods are still produced traditionally by spontaneous fermentation and only limited knowledge has been obtained regarding the microbiota of these products. The preparation of many indigenous or traditional fermented foods and beverages remains today as a house art. They are produced in homes, villages and small-scale industries.

Indian fermented foods are diverse due to diversity in India's culture and food habit. Consumption of some of the fermented foods has medicinal properties such as appetizing, relief from diarrhoea, constipation, stomach pain and gas trouble; it also prevents plaque, infection and malignant diseases. Besides, they have cooling and soothing effect when consumed during summer.