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Kasha

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kasha

Russian *kasha* can refer to virtually any grain cooked into a porridge. Numerous proverbs attest to the centrality of *kasha* in Russian life. In Soviet times, owing to chronic shortages of meat, fresh vegetables and fruit, *kasha* remained a staple in most households and public eating establishments; it also became emblematic of Soviet economic failures. Its varieties are popularly ranked in a hierarchy ascending from thin GULag gruel, barley grits, wheat, rice, millet, and oat porridges to the most favoured buckwheat, rich in protein and iron. Today *kasha* is positively associated with traditional Russian dishes, and as the main food during Russian Orthodox fasts.

See also: GULag; holidays, Russian Orthodox; Lent; proverbs; shortages