**Cropping Patterns and Major Crops of India: Part One**

Two-thirds of India’s population is engaged in agricultural activities. It is a primary activity, which produces food grains and raw materials for industries. India is geographically a vast country so it has various food and non-food crops which are cultivated in three main cropping seasons which are rabi, kharif and zaid.

Major crops can be classified into-

- **Food crops**- Rice, Wheat, Millets, Maize and Pulses.
- **Cash crops**- Sugarcane, Oilseeds, Horticulture crops, Tea, Coffee, Rubber, Cotton and Jute.

### Cropping Seasons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Cropping Season</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Crops</th>
<th>States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Rabi</td>
<td>Sown: October-December</td>
<td>Wheat, barley, peas, gram, mustard etc.</td>
<td>Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh</td>
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<td>Harvested: April-June</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Kharif</td>
<td>Sown: June-July</td>
<td>Rice, maize, jowar, bajra, tur, moong, urad, cotton, jute, groundnut, soybean etc.</td>
<td>Assam, West Bengal, coastal regions of Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Maharashtra</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harvested: September-October</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Zaid</td>
<td>Sown and harvested: March-July (between Rabi and Kharif)</td>
<td>Seasonal fruits, vegetables, fodder crops etc.</td>
<td>Most of the northern and northwestern states</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Major Food Crops**

**Rice**

- **Temperature:** Between 22-32°C with high humidity.
- **Rainfall:** Around 150-300 cm.
- **Soil Type:** Deep clayey and loamy soil.
- **Top Rice Producing States:** West Bengal > Punjab > Uttar Pradesh > Andhra Pradesh > Bihar.
- It is the **staple food crop of majority** of Indian people.
- India is the **second largest producer of rice in the world after China.**
- In states like Assam, West Bengal and Odisha, three crops of paddy are grown in a year. These are Aus, Aman and Boro.
- National Food Security Mission, Hybrid Rice Seed Production and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana are few government initiatives to support rice cultivation.

**Wheat**

- **Temperature:** Between 10-15°C (Sowing time) and 21-26°C (Ripening & Harvesting) with bright sunlight.
- **Rainfall:** Around 75-100 cm.
- **Soil Type:** Well-drained fertile loamy and clayey loamy (Ganga-Satluj plains and black soil region of the Deccan)
- **Top Wheat Producing States:** Uttar Pradesh > Punjab > Madhya Pradesh > Haryana > Rajasthan.
- India is the **second largest producer** after China.
- This is the **second most important cereal crop and the main food crop, in north and north-western** India.
- Success of **Green Revolution** contributed to the growth of Rabi crops especially wheat.
- **Macro Management Mode of Agriculture**, **National Food Security Mission** and **Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana** are few government initiatives to support wheat cultivation.

*Millets (Nutri-Cereals)*
- **Temperature**: Between 27-32°C
- **Rainfall**: Around 50-100 cm.
- **Soil Type**: Can be grown in inferior alluvial or loamy soil because they are less sensitive to soil deficiencies.
  - **Jowar**: Rain-fed crop grown in the moist areas with less or no irrigation.
  - **Bajra**: Sandy soils and shallow black soil.
  - **Ragi**: Red, black, sandy, loamy and shallow black soils. (dry regions)
• Top Millets Producing States: Rajasthan > Karnataka > Maharashtra > Madhya Pradesh > Uttar Pradesh
  ○ Jowar: Maharashtra > Karnataka > Madhya Pradesh > Tamil Nadu > Andhra Pradesh.
  ○ Bajra: Rajasthan > Uttar Pradesh > Gujarat > Madhya Pradesh > Haryana.
• These are also known as coarse grains, which have high nutritional value. Ragi is very rich in iron, calcium, other micro nutrients and roughage.
• Jowar is the third most important food crop with respect to area and production.
• National Agricultural Insurance Scheme, Initiative for Nutritional Security through Intensive Millets Promotion are examples of government’s efforts to support millet production.

Maize
**Temperature:** Between 21-27°C  
**Rainfall:** High rainfall.  
**Soil Type:** Old alluvial soil.  
**Top Maize Producing States:** Karnataka > Maharashtra > Madhya Pradesh > Tamil Nadu > Telangana  
**India is the seventh largest producer** worldwide.  
**It is used both as food and fodder.**  
**Use of modern inputs such as High-Yielding Variety seeds, fertilisers and irrigation** have contributed to the increasing production of maize.  
**Technology Mission on Maize** is one of the government’s initiatives for maize.
**Pulses**

- **Temperature:** Between 20-27°C
- **Rainfall:** Around 25-60 cm.
- **Soil Type:** Sandy-loamy soil.
- **Top Pulses Producing States:** Madhya Pradesh > Rajasthan > Maharashtra > Uttar Pradesh > Karnataka.
- India is the **largest producer** as well as the **consumer** of pulses in the world.
- These are the **major source of protein** in a vegetarian diet.
- Major pulses grown in India are **tur (arhar), urad, moong, masur, peas and gram.**
• Being **leguminous crops**, all these crops except arhar help in restoring soil fertility by **fixing nitrogen from the air**. Therefore, these are mostly grown in rotation with other crops.

• **National Food Security Mission for Pulses, Pulses Development Scheme and Technological Mission on Pulses** are few of the government’s plans to support pulses production.

**NOTE:** *Cash Crops will be covered in the Cropping Patterns and Major Crops of India: Part Two.*