

Whole Grains *for Health*

Whole grains are those that contain 100 percent of the original parts — and naturally-occurring nutrients — of the entire grain seed, including the bran, germ, and endosperm. When the bran and germ are removed, the grain is called refined grain.

Why eat Whole Grains?

In contrast to refined grains, whole grains typically provide more fiber, vitamins and minerals such as selenium, potassium and magnesium. Whole grains digest more slowly than refined grains which helps keep glucose and insulin in check. The fiber helps keep your intestinal tract healthy, helps lower cholesterol and helps you feel full longer.

Consuming whole grains as part of a healthy diet may reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, Type 2 Diabetes and some forms of cancer, and may also help with weight control.



Types of Whole Grains

There are many types of whole grains available to us. Here are some common whole grains to choose (**indicates gluten-free*):

***Brown Rice:** Whole grain rice is usually brown, but can also be red or black. More nutritious than white rice, brown rice takes about twice as long to cook.

***Aromatic Rice:** One of the major types of rice that is known for its aroma and nutty-flavor. Like other rice, whole brown versions are healthier options than white, more processed types. The most common types include basmati rice and jasmine rice.

***Buckwheat:** A fruit seed and cousin of rhubarb, buckwheat has been adopted into the grain family

due to its appearance, nutrients and nutty flavor. It's a gluten-free alternative that is commonly ground into flour, and is often used for making more nutritious pancakes.

***Millet:** A gluten-free alternative, millet is very versatile and cooks in approximately 30 minutes. It can range from fluffy to creamy depending on the cooking method. Millet can be used in its natural form in side dishes and desserts, and can also be ground into flour.

***Quinoa:** An ancient seed that is a complete protein, quinoa can be found as several varieties: white, red, or black. This gluten-free alternative is often used as a substitute for rice or pasta. It can be used in its natural form in side dishes, soups, and salads, but is increasingly being used in processed foods.

***Wild Rice:** Technically a seed of a grass grown in the Great Lakes region of the U.S., wild rice is often used in combination with other varieties of rice or grains.

Bulgur: A very nutritious grain that includes more fiber than many, bulgur is quick cooking with a mild flavor. While great in side dishes or salads, it can also be used to stretch a budget by adding it to ground beef dishes, such as meatloaf or sloppy joes.

Farro: Also known as emmer, farro is an ancient form of wheat now grown in the U.S. Look for words, "whole farro" to ensure it's whole grain. It is often used in salads, soups, pasta or risotto.

Wheat berries: Whole-wheat kernels that impart a slightly sweet and nutty flavor, wheat berries are often used in side dishes or breakfast cereals.



Finding Whole Grains

It's easier than you think. Look for the whole grain stamp on package labels. If a product bears the 100% Stamp, then all of its grain ingredients are whole grains. There is a minimum requirement of 16 grams – a full serving – of whole grain per labeled serving, for products using the 100% Stamp.



100% stamp = 16g or more



Basic stamp = at least 8g

If a product bears the Basic Stamp, it contains at least 8 grams – a half serving – of whole grain, but may also contain some refined grain.

Each Stamp also shows a number, telling you how many grams of whole grain ingredients are in a serving of the product.

If you don't see the whole grain stamp, there are other ways to determine whether a food is a whole grain. Read the ingredients list and choose products that name a whole-grain ingredient first on the list. Look for "whole wheat," "brown rice," "bulgur," "buckwheat," "oatmeal," "whole-grain cornmeal," "whole oats," "whole rye," or "wild rice."

The color of a food is not an indication that it is a whole-grain food. Foods labeled as "multi-grain," "stone-ground," "100% wheat," "cracked wheat," "seven-grain," or "bran" are usually not 100% whole-grain products, and may not contain any whole grain.

How much should you eat?

The number of servings each person should eat daily depends on their calorie needs, but in general, experts recommend making half of the grains eaten daily whole grain. To make half your grains whole grains, substitute whole-grain foods for refined-grain products. For example, eat 100% whole-wheat bread or bagels instead of white bread or bagels, brown rice instead of white rice, and whole-grain cereals instead of refined cereals.

You can easily add whole grains to your meals and even use your favorite recipes. Try some of these ideas:

Make simple substitutions

- **Substitute up to half the white flour** with whole wheat, buckwheat, millet or oat flour in your regular recipes for cookies, muffins, quick breads, pancakes or waffles. They may need a bit more leavening in order to rise.
- **For canned or home-made soup, add half a cup of cooked grains** such as wheat or rye berries, wild rice, brown rice, sorghum or barley.
- **Use whole corn meal** for corn breads and muffins.
- Add three-quarters of a cup of **uncooked oats instead of bread crumbs** for each pound of ground beef or turkey when you make meatballs, burgers or meatloaf.

Try new foods

- **Make risottos, pilafs and other dishes with whole grains** such as brown rice, barley, bulgur, millet, quinoa or sorghum.
- Enjoy **whole grain salads** like tabbouleh.
- Buy **whole grain pasta** or one of the blends that's part whole-grain, part white.
- Use **whole grain pita bread, tortillas or bagels** for sandwiches instead of white bread.

Tips for Cooking Whole Grains

- Most whole grains can be soaked prior to cooking to reduce overall cooking time (with the exception of quinoa).
- Cook whole grains in large batches and keep in the refrigerator for several days or freeze for later use.
- Most grains cook similarly to rice. They are done when preferred tenderness is reached. More water may be added if you desire more tender grains.
- For most grains, rinse before cooking.



Farro Salad with Asparagus and Parmesan

Ingredients

1 c. farro	¼ c. dried cranberries
6 oz. fresh asparagus, trimmed	¼ c. chopped fresh parsley
½ c. red and yellow cherry tomatoes, halved	3 Tbsp. chopped fresh chives
½ c. chopped walnuts	2 Tbsp. balsamic vinaigrette, or to taste
	½ c. shaved Parmesan cheese, divided



Note: If you are unable to find farro, look for spelt or wheat berries.

Preparation

Soak farro in a large bowl of water in the refrigerator for at least 12 hours. Drain. Fill a large pot with lightly salted water and bring to a rolling boil over high heat. Once the water is boiling, stir in the drained farro, and return to a boil. Reduce heat to medium, then cook the farro uncovered, stirring occasionally for 20 minutes. Reduce heat to low, cover, and continue simmering until tender, about 30 more minutes. Drain and allow to cool.

Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Add the asparagus, and cook uncovered until tender, about 3 minutes. Drain in a colander, then immediately immerse in ice water for several minutes until cold to stop the cooking process. Once the asparagus is cold, drain well, and chop. Set aside.

Place farro, asparagus, tomatoes, walnuts, cranberries, parsley, and chives in a large bowl. Drizzle the balsamic vinaigrette over and sprinkle about ¾ cups Parmesan cheese, then toss. Top with the remaining ¼ cup of Parmesan cheese. Serve at room temperature.

Makes 6 servings. Calories 223; Total Fat: 9g; Cholesterol: 6mg; Sodium: 164mg; Total Carbohydrate: 32g; Fiber: 2g; Protein: 8g

Quinoa and Black Beans

Ingredients

½ tsp. canola oil	⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper
½ onion, chopped	salt and ground black pepper to taste
1½ cloves garlic, chopped	½ c. frozen corn kernels
¼ c. quinoa	1 (15-oz.) can black beans, no salt added, rinsed and drained
¾ c. low-sodium vegetable or chicken broth	¼ c. chopped fresh cilantro
½ tsp. ground cumin	



Preparation

Heat oil in a saucepan over medium heat; cook and stir onion and garlic until lightly browned, about 10 minutes.

Mix quinoa into onion mixture and cover with broth; season with cumin, cayenne pepper, salt, and pepper. Bring the mixture to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer until quinoa is tender and broth is absorbed, about 20 minutes. Stir frozen corn into the saucepan, and continue to simmer until heated through, about 5 minutes; mix in the black beans and cilantro.

Makes 5 servings. Calories 154; Fat: 2g; Cholesterol: 0mg; Sodium: 131mg; Carbohydrates: 27g; Fiber: 7g; Protein: 8g