

## GREAT GRAINS

Whole grains are packed with vitamins, minerals, and fiber and shine nutritionally compared to white rice, pasta, white bread, or processed cereals. Researchers have discovered that whole grains contain phytochemicals, compounds like lignans, flavonoids, and saponins which may play key roles in lowering risk of heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. A serving is approximately 1 oz. or 1/2 cup cooked. Add even more flavor to your grains by cooking in low-sodium broth instead of water.

**Amaranth** This protein-rich grain-like food is a good source of fiber, vitamin E, calcium, and iron. Amaranth seeds have a pleasant, peppery flavor and are well-tolerated by people sensitive to wheat or gluten. If you don't like its porridge-like consistency, cook a small amount with another grain, following the cooking directions for the predominant grain.

**To cook:** Cook 1 cup amaranth in 3 cups water for 1/2 hour.

**Barley** This tiny oval grain has a mild, nutty flavor and though commonly used in soups and stews, can also be served as a side dish or in salads. It is rich in complex carbs and contains as much soluble fiber and more total fiber than oats.

**To cook:** Add 1 cup barley to 3 cups boiling water. Reduce heat to simmer; cover and cook for 35 to 40 minutes.

**Brown Rice** The whole, unpolished rice grain has a slightly nutty flavor and chewier texture than white rice. Its color comes from the outer layer of nutritious, fiber-rich bran. Brown rice retains more fiber, vitamins, and minerals than any other type of rice.

**To cook:** Add 1 cup of rice to 2 cups boiling water. Lower heat to simmer, cover and cook for 45-60 minutes.

**Buckwheat** Triangular seeds from a fruit related to rhubarb and sorrel, buckwheat has a nutty flavor and is sold roasted as kasha, whole grain, cracked, or ground into flour.

**To cook:** Simmer 1-part groats in 2 parts water for 15 minutes. Medium and fine grades cook more quickly.

**Bulgur** Granulated whole-wheat kernels that have been steamed, dried, and cracked into small pieces. Bulgur has a unique nutty flavor and chewy texture. It is used in pilaf, stuffing, and salads.

**To cook:** Add 1 cup bulgur to 2 cups cold water. Add salt as desired (1/2 teaspoon). Cover, bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes.

**Farro** This ancient grain has roots in Mesopotamia. It is a staple in Italy, often referred to as an "Italian rice." Farro has a nutty flavor, chewy texture, and is rich in fiber and protein.

**To cook:** Add 1 cup farro to 2 1/2 cups boiling water. Cover and simmer for 20-30 minutes.

**Freekeh** This grain is derived from North Africa and Eastern Mediterranean/West Asian regions. It comes from smoking durum wheat grains that are then polished to remove the shells and reveal freekeh's color and texture. It tends to have a more earthy, nutty flavor. It's rich in protein, iron, and antioxidants.

**To cook:** Add 1 cup freekeh to 2 ½ cups boiling water. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes, then let stand an additional 5 minutes until water is absorbed.

**Millet** These tiny pale-yellow seeds (most of us think of millet as birdseed) outshine whole wheat and brown rice in some B vitamins, copper, and iron. Cooked millet can be used in soups, casseroles, stuffings, and salads. Toasting millet before cooking enhances the flavor.

**To cook:** Add 1 cup millet to 2 cups boiling water. Cover and simmer for 30-45 minutes until water is absorbed.

**Quinoa** This ancient Incan staple (pronounced keen-wah) has a delicate flavor and a crunchy texture. Though truly a grain-like food, quinoa is the fruit of an herb which looks like and cooks like a grain. Quinoa is in a category called "psudocereals."

**To cook:** Rinse 1 cup quinoa thoroughly in a small strainer (this will remove saponin, a natural bitter coating.) Place quinoa and 2 cups water in a saucepan and bring to boil. Reduce to a simmer; cover and cook until all water is absorbed (10-15 minutes.) Appears clear when cooked.

**Sorghum** It's one of the top five cereal crops in the world. Sorghum is high in fiber, along with phytochemicals that have been shown to help control cholesterol levels and antioxidants that may help control blood glucose.

**To cook:** Cook 1 cup sorghum in 3 cups water. Bring to a boil, cover, and simmer for 45-60 minutes. Let rest covered for 5 minutes before serving.

**Spelt** A distant cousin to wheat, spelt is a good source of fiber and B vitamins. Available as whole berries or whole or refined flour. Pastas and breads made with spelt can be found in natural foods stores.

**To cook:** Cook 1 cup berries in 4 cups water for 30-40 minutes.

**Teff** The world's smallest grain is an Ethiopian staple and has a sweet, nutty flavor. Teff is especially rich in protein and calcium. It is well tolerated by people sensitive to wheat or gluten. Makes a nutritious hot breakfast cereal.

**To cook:** Cook 1 cup teff in 3 cups water for 15-20 minutes.

**Triticale** A relatively young grain (developed only 200 years ago) is a cross between wheat and rye. Triticale berries are similar to wheat berries but have a subtle rye flavor. It is an excellent source of fiber, B vitamins, and magnesium, plus a good source of iron.

**To cook:** Cook 1 cup berries in 4 cups water for 1 hour. Triticale flakes cook up into a hot breakfast cereal in about 15 minutes.