



Definition

Whole grains or foods made from them contain all the essential parts and naturally occurring nutrients of the entire grain seed. If the grain has been processed (e.g., cracked, crushed, rolled, extruded, and/or cooked), the food product should deliver approximately the same rich balance of nutrients that are found in the original grain seed.

Health Benefits

Studies show that eating whole grains instead of refined grains lowers the risk of many chronic diseases. While benefits are most pronounced for those consuming at least 3 servings daily, some studies show reduced risks from as little as one serving daily. The message: every whole grain in your diet helps!

The main benefits of whole grains most documented by repeated studies include:

- Stroke risk reduced 30-36%
- Type 2 diabetes risk reduced 21-30%
- Heart disease risk reduced 25-28%
- Better weight maintenance

Other benefits indicated by recent studies include:

- Reduced risk of asthma
- Healthier carotid arteries
- Reduction of inflammatory disease risk
- Lower risk of colorectal cancer
- Healthier blood pressure levels
- Less gum disease and tooth loss

List of Whole Grains

The following when consumed in a form including the bran, germ and endosperm, are examples* of which are generally accepted whole grain foods & flours.

- Amaranth
- Barley
- Buckwheat
- Corn, including whole cornmeal and popcorn
- Millet
- Oats
- Quinoa
- Rice, both brown and colored
- Rye
- Sorghum (also called Milo)
- Teff
- Triticale

- Wheat, including varieties such as spelt, emmer, faro, einkorn, Kamut, durum and forms such as bulgur, cracked wheat and wheat berries
- Wild rice

* This list is not meant to be comprehensive, but to include those grains most familiar to consumers.

** Amaranth, quinoa and buckwheat are not in the Poaceae botanical family but are normally included with true cereal grains because their nutritional profile, preparation and use, are so similar.

Cooking Whole Grains

You can add whole grains to your meals without cooking, simply by choosing breads, breakfast cereals and other prepared whole grain foods. If you'd like to enjoy delicious whole grains at home as a side dish, however here are some guidelines for cooking them from scratch.

Plain Grains – Directions

Cooking most grains is very similar to cooking rice. You put the dry grain in a pan with water or broth, bring it to a boil, then simmer until the liquid is absorbed.

Time Varies

Grains can vary in cooking time depending on the age of the grain, the variety, and the pans you're using to cook. When you decide they're tender and tasty, they're done. If the grain is not as tender as you like when "time is up," simply add more water and continue cooking. A short cut for cooking grains is letting them sit in allotted water for a few hours before cooking.

To 1 cup of this grain:	Add this much water or broth:	Bring to a boil, then simmer for:	Amount after cooking:
Amaranth	2 cups	20-25 minutes	3 ½ cups
Barley, hulled	3 cups	45-60 minutes	3 ½ cups
Buckwheat	2 cups	20 minutes	4 cups
Bulgur	2 cups	10-12 minutes	3 cups
Cornmeal (Polenta)	4 cups	25-30 minutes	2 ½ cups
Kamut	4 cups	Soak overnight then cook 45-60 minutes	3 cups
Millet, hulled	2 ½ cups	25-35 minutes	4 cups
Oats, steel cut	4 cups	30 minutes	3 cups
Pasta, whole wheat	6 cups	8-12 minutes	Varies
Quinoa	2 cups	12-15 minutes	3+ cups
Rice, brown or colored	2 ½ cups	25-45 minutes	3-4 cups
Rye	4 cups	Soak overnight then cook 45-60 minutes	3 cups
Sorghum	4 cups	25-40 minutes	3 cups
Spelt Berries	4 cups	Soak overnight then cook 45-60 minutes	3 cups
Wheat Berries	4 cups	Soak overnight then cook 45-60 minutes	3 cups
Wild Rice	3 cups	45-55 minutes	3 ½ cups

~Maybe you've already been eating whole grain breakfast cereals and whole wheat bread, or tried brown rice once or twice. That is a great start but now it's time to take on new adventures and try some new universal tastes you've been missing out on!