

Food *for* Thought

The Healthy Choice



Nutritional News

Wholesome Grains

Choose whole rather than refined grains for optimum benefits. Foods from the bread, cereal, rice and pasta group are important sources of carbohydrates and form the basis of your diet. Official guidelines recommend that you eat six to eleven servings from the group each day.

It is important to distinguish between whole and refined grains and to make a point of choosing whole grains. Studies have shown that certain starchy foods may have a negative effect on health. For example, people whose diets consist primarily of potatoes, white rice and foods made from refined flour have higher rates of diabetes and cardiovascular disease than those who eat from whole grains. Therefore, try to obtain most of your carbohydrates from whole grain foods, such as whole wheat bread, brown rice, and whole wheat pasta and limit the amount of refined products.

By including whole grains in your diet, you may lower your risk of cardiovascular disease because they are low in saturated fat and high in fiber, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. If you follow a vegetarian diet, whole grains are an important source of protein when they are combined with legumes or dairy products.

What are whole grains?

A whole grain is a grain that has not been processed. It consists of the bran, germ, and endosperm inside an edible outer coating (hull). The bran forms a protective inner covering and is an excellent source of fiber. The germ is the

embryo of a new plant and is a source of protein, vitamins, minerals and it contains polyunsaturated fats. The endosperm supplies most of the carbohydrates, mainly in the form of starch. When grains are processed, the hull, bran and germ are removed, leaving the product, such as white flour, that is deficient in protein, vitamins and fiber. While some of these nutrients may be replaced and other important nutrients added to products, whole grains are undoubtedly the best choice.

The versatility of whole grains

Grains are a dietary staple in most cultures, and a look at other cuisines can provide inspiration for your own cooking. For example, long grain rice is used as the basis of pilafs in Indian and Middle Eastern cuisine, while short grain rice cooked in simmering broth produces Italy's creamy risottos. These and other grains are now widely available and you can be as creative as you like when cooking them.

Which grains can I use?

Grains can be eaten whole, processed into cold and hot cereals, or flour for many food products such as breads, muffins and soups. In general, grains are a good source of vitamins and minerals, especially B vitamins and calcium, potassium and phosphorus. Healthy grains to use include the following.

Whole Wheat is used to make cereals and flour for bread. Whole wheat can also be cooked as a cereal or used instead of rice and is packed with B vitamins. **Cracked wheat** is wheat broken

into small pieces for faster cooking. **Bulgur wheat** is partially cooked and dried before being cracked.

Oats have more protein than most grains. They are also high in soluble fiber, which helps eliminate cholesterol from the body. Whole oats (**groats**) are whole grain but with the hull removed. Rolled oats (**oatmeal**) are whole oats stemmed and then flattened between rollers.

Corn is rich in starch, corn can be eaten fresh, on or off the cob, or used as **hominy** (hulled and dried corn), which as neither the bran nor the germ). Ground hominy is known as **grits** and **cornmeal** is made from dried kernels.

Barley *Whole barley* is nuttier and chewier than *pearled barley* (polished barley without the hull and bran) and must be soaked before cooking. In *malted barley*, the grain is allowed to begin sprouting. Barley is the main ingredient in beer and malt whiskey.

Rye Similar to wheat in nutritional value, rye is frequently used with wheat in bread products. Rye is available in whole and cracked rye grains which can be cooked as cereal or ground into flour for baking.

Millet contains nearly as much protein as wheat. It is available in *whole* and *cracked* forms and is usually stripped of its tough, inedible hull. It is used in cakes, cookies, bread puddings and as a substitute for rice.

Quinoa is an excellent source of protein, this grain can be substituted for and added to nearly any other grain and is particularly good in pilafs.

Brown Rice retains both the bran and the germ of the rice kernel, and is a source of protein, carbohydrates and fiber. Brown rice needs to be cooked in more water than white rice and will take nearly twice as long to cook.

Wild Rice has twice the protein of white rice and fewer calories. Use it in the same way as white or brown rice.

Spicy Whole-Grain Pilaf

Serves 4

Ingredients

1 tsp	Cumin
1 tsp	Turmeric
As Needed	Vegetable Oil
1 ea	Onion, sliced
2 ea	Garlic cloves, crushed
1 C	Whole grain rice, uncooked
½ C	Wild rice, uncooked
3 ea	Bell Peppers, seeded and sliced lengthwise
2 ea	Chili peppers, cut crosswise
2 T	Tomato puree
2 T	Almonds, Sliced

Method

1. Sauté spices for 2 minutes in a little vegetable oil. Add onion and garlic and sauté for another 2 minutes.
2. Add both rice's to the pan and mix. Add enough water or vegetable stock to cover rice mixture and simmer for 20 minutes.
3. Add sliced peppers and chilies to the pan. Stir in tomato puree and simmer another 5 minutes or until rice is tender and the peppers are softened.
4. Remove the pilaf and place in serving dish. Garnish with sliced almonds

Nutritional Information, per serving:

Calories 276, Total Fat 1.7 g, Cholesterol 0 mg, Protein 7.6 g, Carbohydrate 59 g, Fiber 5.6 g, Sodium 39 mg.

Good source of Vitamins: A, Fol, C, K and Minerals: Ca, Mg, P, K

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