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.

Farro Salad with Asparagus and Parmesan

**Ingredients**

- 1 c. farro
- 6 oz. fresh asparagus, trimmed
- ½ c. red and yellow cherry tomatoes, halved
- ½ c. chopped walnuts
- ⅛ c. dried cranberries
- ⅛ c. chopped fresh parsley
- 3 Tbsp. chopped fresh chives
- ⅛ c. shaved Parmesan cheese, divided
- ⅛ c. dried cranberries
- ⅛ c. chopped fresh parsley
- 3 Tbsp. chopped fresh chives
- 2 Tbsp. balsamic vinaigrette, or to taste

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

**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
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, brown rice takes about twice as long to cook.

**Buckwheat:** A true seed and cousin of rhubarb, buckwheat has been adopted into the grain family. It can also be ground into flour. A gluten-free alternative that is commonly used in its natural form in side dishes, soups and salads, 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.

**Millet:** Technically a seed of a grass grown in the Great Lakes region of the U.S., wild rice is an ancient form of wheat now grown in the U.S. Look for words, such as meatloaf or sloppy joes.

**Farro:** Also known as emmer, farro is an ancient form of wheat grown in the U.S. Look for words, “whole farro,” “buckwheat,” “oatmeal,” “wild grain” or “brown.”

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

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

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 half serving – of whole grain per labeled serving, for products using the 100% Stamp. 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 ingredients. Each Stamp also shows a number, telling you how many grams of whole grain ingredients are in a serving of the product.

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 grain, 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:

Tips for Cooking Whole Grains

- **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 rice 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.

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