

Gloriously Good Whole Grains¹

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You know they are good for you and that you should eat more of them, but have you ever really wondered what "whole grains" are and why they are important? If you have, you probably are not alone. Would you like to know if all grains created equal or how to tell the difference between a refined grain and a whole grain? Well, look no further. This publication will answer your questions about whole grains and help you understand what makes whole grains so glorious.



MyPyramid Grains Group

MyPyramid is a tool developed by the USDA to help people select a diet that meets their daily nutrition needs. Proportions of foods to be consumed daily from each group are shown by the width of the colored bands that represent each food group. In general, more food should be eaten from the food groups with the wider bands than the narrow bands. The Grains group has the widest band, so foods from this group should make up the biggest part of a diet. The average adult needs about six ounces of grain foods every day. The exact amount depends on your calorie needs.

When selecting grain foods, be sure to **make half of them whole grains!** If you eat six ounces of grains, get at least three ounces in the form of whole grains. In general one ounce is about the size of 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of

ready-to-eat cereal, or ½ cup of cooked rice, pasta, or cereal. Visit www.mypyramid.gov for a personalized recommendation for the amount of grains you should consume every day.

Whole Grains Basics

Below are answers to some commonly asked questions about whole grains.

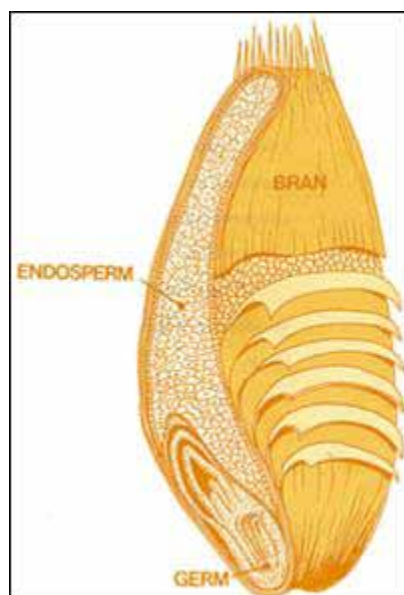
What is the difference between whole grains and refined grains?

The answer lies in how they are processed. Whole grains contain the bran, the germ, and the endosperm (see the figure below). Whole grains are excellent sources of B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin and folate), magnesium, iron, selenium, and fiber. The bran is the portion that is rich in dietary fiber and is essential for digestive health. Refined grains have had the bran and the germ removed, leaving only the endosperm. Unfortunately most of the nutrients of the whole grain are lost during processing. Refined grains, such as unbleached or bleached flour (refined wheat), are seen in many popular packaged foods. White bread, pasta, rice, cereals and snack foods are examples of foods often

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made with refined grains. **Enrichment** of refined grains replaces only thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, iron and folic acid (a form of the vitamin folate). **Fortification** adds additional nutrients, many of which are not in the original whole grain.



What are examples of whole grains?

Whole grains include whole wheat flour, popcorn, quinoa, barley, oats, bulgur, rye, brown rice, whole corn meal, amaranth, buckwheat, sorghum, millet, and triticale. Foods made with whole grains such as whole wheat crackers, whole wheat bread, whole wheat pasta, and corn tortillas are good sources of nutrients and fiber.

Can I trust every whole grain claim on a package?

Absolutely not! There still are many food packages on the grocery store shelves with misleading labels. It can get confusing and you can't always trust what you see on the front of the package. Terms like multigrain, made with 100% whole grain, seven grain, cracked wheat, and bran are terms that can fool you into thinking that you are making a healthy choice. These products may contain some whole grains, but may not be good or excellent sources of whole grains.

How can I tell if a food product is truly a whole grain product?

The only way to know if a product is partly or 100% whole grain is to read the **ingredients list!** If a food product lists "whole grain" as one of the first ingredients, it is probably a good source of whole grains. The very first ingredient on the ingredients list should have the word "whole" such as whole wheat, whole oat, or whole rye. Also look for brown rice, steel cut oats, and whole grain corn flour as the first ingredient. Another thing to look for is one of the whole grain stamps: the Basic Stamp and the 100% Stamp.



The Whole Grains Council created these stamps to make it easier for consumers to find whole grain foods. The Basic Stamp lets the consumer know that the food product contains at least 8 grams of whole grain per serving, but it also may contain some extra bran, germ, or refined flour. The 100% Stamp tells the consumer that the product provides at least 16 grams of whole grain per serving and can only be used on products that are entirely whole grain.

How can I incorporate more grains into my diet?

Adding grains into your diet may be easier than you think! Try taking these classic foods/meals and replacing the refined grain in the recipe with a gloriously good whole grain.

- Replace $\frac{1}{3}$ of the refined flour in a muffin or bread recipe with rolled oats.
- Use whole wheat pasta instead of white pasta when making spaghetti and

meatballs. Garlic bread made with 50–100% whole wheat bread is a great addition to an Italian feast!

- Replace your homemade white pizza crust with whole wheat or half whole wheat crust.
- Whole grain pasta salad is an appetizing side dish. Add diced tomatoes, onions, peppers, or any of your favorite vegetables to freshly cooked cork screw whole grain noodles. Add light Italian dressing for a kick!
- Use corn or whole wheat tortillas next time you whip up your favorite Mexican feast.
- Oatmeal pancakes are a great source of whole grains. Combine cooked oatmeal, mashed bananas, and egg whites together into a thick paste. Scoop out the mix with your hands and mold into four-inch pancakes. Sear and serve with light syrup for a delicious and healthy breakfast treat.
- A whole wheat bread, banana, and peanut butter sandwich is a great afternoon snack to fuel you through the day.
- Whole grain English muffins are a great start for the day. Top a toasted muffin with scrambled egg or omelet and cheese and you have a delicious, healthy breakfast sandwich that's just as good as it is good for you!

Believe it or not whole grains can even be fun! So break out your apron and cookbooks and try out your favorite recipes using whole grains. Whole grain flour is a great addition when baking your favorite goodies. So go for it and get creative with gloriously good whole grains. You may surprise yourself!



Learn More

To learn more about whole grains, use these contacts in your area:

- 4 Cooperative Extension Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) Educator (look in the blue pages of your telephone book.) Florida Extension offices are listed online by UF/IFAS at <http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/map>.
- 4 For referral to a registered dietitian (RD) in your area you can call the Florida Dietetic Association at (850) 386-8850 or check the yellow pages of your phone book.

Recommended Websites

- ☞ *Whole Grains Council* – The Whole Grains Council contains valuable resources and information on whole grains. It includes background information on whole grains, the importance of incorporating whole grains in the diet, and valuable resources to help consumers get the real facts on whole grain products. <http://www.wholegrainscouncil.org/>
- ☞ *MyPyramid* – MyPyramid provides the current recommendations for each of the food groups and extensive information about whole grains and how to incorporate them into a healthy diet. <http://www.mypyramid.gov>.