



Give Them More  
of the  
Good Stuff!

# Whole Grain Basics

## Shop and Save



- Bulk bins allow you to buy just the amount you need or can use within a month or two. Cost may be less than packaged grains.
- Whole grains should smell faintly sweet and pleasant or have no odor at all. Avoid grains that smell unpleasant or musty.
- Pre-packaged whole grains may have “USE-by” dates.

Eating whole grains promotes healthy blood pressure, cholesterol, digestion, blood sugar and weight control.

## More Whole Grains!



- Look for the whole grain stamp on packaged foods.
- Use cooked whole grains for salads, breakfast bowls, or a dinner side dish.
- Try whole grain pasta. It is firm and has a nutty taste.
- Wheat, rye and barley contain gluten but corn, oats, quinoa, rice and buckwheat are naturally gluten free. To be sure that they are processed separately from grains containing gluten, look for “gluten-free” on the package.



Visit [FoodHero.org](http://FoodHero.org) for easy, delicious recipes using whole grains

## Store Well Waste Less

- Heat, air and light can make whole grains taste and smell rancid. Store whole grains in:
  - airtight containers or reclosable bags. Airtight

- packaging will also keep out any insects.
  - a cool, dry and dark location or choose a container that keeps light out. Freeze for longest storage.
- Stored properly, whole intact grains will keep for up to 6 months on a cool, dry shelf or up to a year in the



- freezer.
- Ground whole grains will keep for 1 to 3 months on a cool, dry shelf or 2 to 6 months in the freezer.



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# Cooking Whole Grains

## Choose a Whole Grain

Use suggested cooking times and amounts of liquid as a guide. Grains are done when you decide they are as tender as you like. Liquid can be water, broth, milk or a mixture.

**Barley - Hulled or hull-less:**  
Pearled barley is not whole grain.  
1 cup barley + 3 cups liquid = 3½ cups cooked. Cook for 45 to 60 minutes.

**Corn - Grits/polenta:**  
Enriched grains are not usually whole grain. 1 cup grits/polenta + 4 cups liquid = 2½ cups cooked. Cook for 25 to 30 minutes.

**Oats - Rolled oats:**  
1 cup oats + 2 cups liquid = 2 cups cooked. Cook for 5 to 20 minutes.

**Steel cut oats:** 1 cup oats + 4 cups liquid = 4 cups cooked. Cook for 20 minutes.

**Quinoa -** If not pre-washed, rinse with cold water before cooking. 1 cup quinoa + 2 cups liquid = 3 cups cooked. Cook for 12 to 15 minutes.

**Rice - Brown, red or black:**  
White rice is not whole grain. 1 cup rice + 2½ cups liquid = 3 to 4 cups cooked. Cook for 25 to 45 minutes.

**Wheat - Bulgur:** 1 cup bulgur + 2 cups liquid = 3 cups cooked. Cook for 10 to 12 minutes.

**Wheat berries:** 1 cup wheat berries + 4 cups liquid = 3 cups cooked. Cook for 45 to 60 minutes.

## Make Whole Grains Easy

Cook grains in large batches to use later:

- ☀ Divide cooked, cooled grains into single-use amounts in freezer bags or containers. Label and date. Refrigerate or freeze.
- ☀ Use refrigerated cooked grains within 3-4 days. Use frozen cooked grains within 2-3 months.
- ☀ Add frozen cooked grains to soups or skillet meals straight from the refrigerator or freezer. As the dish cooks, the grains will reheat.
- ☀ To quickly reheat refrigerated or frozen grains, add a small amount of water and heat in the microwave or in a saucepan on low until warmed. Stir as needed to prevent sticking.

## Kids Can!

When kids help make healthy food, they are more likely to try it. Show kids how to:

- ☀ measure grains and liquids.
- ☀ package cooked grains for the freezer.

## Choose a Cooking Method

**Steamed:** Bring liquid to a boil in a large saucepan. Stir in grain. Cover. Reduce heat to low and simmer until tender. Drain extra liquid if needed.

**Pilaf-style:** Sauté in a little oil until lightly golden. Vegetables and seasonings can be added. Stir in liquid. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, cover and simmer until grain is tender and has absorbed all liquid.

**Rice cooker:** Follow rice cooker directions for other grains. Or try the white rice settings for grains that take 25 minutes or less and the brown rice settings for grains that require longer cooking. Use the same amount of liquid as if steaming.