

SEPTEMBER: WHOLE GRAINS

Whole grains are unprocessed grains such as wheat, corn, rice, oats, barley, quinoa, sorghum, spelt, and rye. The word “whole” in front of a particular grain means that the grain is in its “whole” form and thus has not been refined, which is the process that removes the bran and germ from the grain. Refining a grain makes it less healthy because it removes dietary fiber, iron, and many vitamins. So, when choosing bread products, cereals, rice, and pasta, look for the **whole grain** varieties because eating whole grains has been shown to reduce the risks associated with obesity, including heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes.

Because food labels are very confusing when it comes to whole grains, be sure to read the ingredient list on the package to make sure the word “**whole**” is listed with the *first ingredient* (ex. whole wheat flour).

CHECK OUT THE TABLE BELOW TO HELP YOU SELECT THE HEALTHIEST, WHOLE GRAIN FOODS!

Words you may see on food packages	What the description of grains means	Types of products
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole grain • Whole wheat • Stone-ground whole grain • Brown rice • Buckwheat • Popcorn 	<p><i>These words tell you that the item contains all parts of the grain, so you're getting all the healthy nutrients of the whole grain.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☺ Whole wheat flour ☺ Stone ground 100% whole wheat bread ☺ Whole wheat pasta ☺ Whole wheat mini bagels ☺ Oatmeal ☺ Brown rice ☺ Popcorn (plain) ☺ Whole wheat cereal flakes ☺ Whole wheat hamburger buns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wheat flour • Semolina • Durum wheat • Organic flour • Multigrain (may describe several whole grains or several refined grains, or a mix of both) 	<p><i>These words accurately describe what is in the package, but because some parts of the grain may be missing, you are likely missing the healthy benefits of whole grains.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multigrain bread ▪ Corn flakes ▪ Puffed wheat ▪ Cream of wheat ▪ Cereals “made with” whole grains
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enriched flour or white flour • Degerminated corn meal • Bran • Wheat germ 	<p><i>These words never describe whole grains.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> X White bread X White rice X White/regular pasta/noodles X Flour tortillas X White hotdog buns X Grits

Whole Grains Tips

- To eat more **whole grains**, substitute a **whole-grain** product for a refined product. Make sure “whole” is listed before the first ingredient. Try **stone-ground whole wheat** bread instead of white bread slices; **whole wheat** hotdog buns instead of white hotdog buns; **whole wheat** pasta instead of regular pasta; or **brown rice** instead of white rice. It’s important to *substitute* the **whole-grain** product for the refined one, rather than *adding* the **whole-grain** product.
- Try using an unsweetened, **whole grain** ready-to-eat cereal as croutons on your salad, or in place of broken-up crackers with soup.
- **Popcorn**, a **whole grain**, can be a healthy snack with little or no added salt and butter. But remember to read the label on packaged popcorn so you don’t get too much fat and sodium in this healthy snack!

Adapted from: USDA MyPyramid Grains Tips

Whole Grains Recipe!

MUNCHIE MIX – A GREAT SNACK FOR SUMMER HIKES!

Makes 4 servings

Ingredients

- ½ cup **whole grain cereal** (make sure the first ingredient has “whole” before its name)
- ½ cup **whole grain** pretzel sticks/rounds
- ½ cup raisins or other dried fruit
- ½ cup nuts of your choice
- ½ cup sunflower seeds

Combine ingredients in a bowl, mix, and serve. Put ½ cup in baggies for snacks while hiking and/or traveling this summer! Remember, *portion control*—enjoy only ½ cup at a time!

Whole Grains Recipes!

WHOLE GRAIN PITA PIZZA

Makes 2 servings

Ingredients

- 2 round 6-7” **whole wheat** pitas
- ¾ cup (~6 ounces) **tomato** spaghetti sauce (make your own using the recipe in the Tomato FoM Newsletter!)
- ¼ cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 cup chopped vegetables (onions, peppers, mushrooms, spinach, olives – your choice!)
- Extra virgin olive oil

Preheat oven to 350°F. Lay pitas on a flat surface. Spread ½ of the sauce on each pita round. If you are using chopped fresh spinach, add it now, before the cheese, so it won’t dry out too much. Top each with cheese, and then vegetables. Drizzle with oil. Bake at 350°F for 15 minutes on a pizza pan or cookie sheet.

BREAKFAST EGG WRAP – FAST AND NUTRITIOUS!

Makes 1 serving

Ingredients

- 1 hard-boiled egg, without shell, cut in half; or 1 scrambled egg
- 1 **whole grain** tortilla
- 2 Tbsp. of tomato salsa
- 1 slice of reduced-fat cheese (any kind you like!)

Wrap egg and a slice of cheese, topped with two Tbsp. of tomato salsa, in a whole grain tortilla for a fast one-handed breakfast.

[Hint: Boil a bunch of eggs and store in the fridge to have them on hand for this quick breakfast – then just heat the nutrition-filled wrap in the microwave for a hot breakfast!]