

# Choose Whole Grains

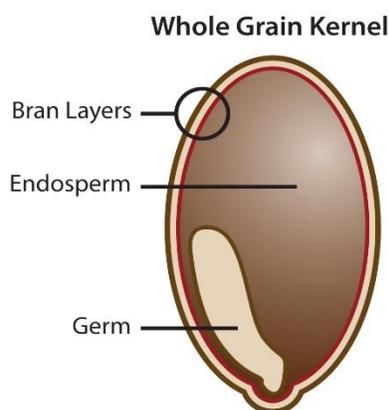
Did you know that Canada's Food Guide says whole grain foods are a healthier choice than refined grains?

Whole grains increase your fibre intake and have a lot of nutrients working together to promote health.

Whole grains give your body carbohydrates, fibre, and protein. They also provide B vitamins, iron, zinc, magnesium, and plant compounds called phytonutrients.

## What is a whole grain?

**Whole grains** are made of the entire grain kernel. The kernel has three parts: the outer bran layer, the endosperm, and the germ. Each part has important nutrients.



**Refined grains** have all or part of the bran and germ removed. They don't have important nutrients like fibre, vitamins, and minerals. Examples of refined grains are white flour, white rice, grits, and cream of wheat.

Some refined grains have been enriched. This means that some vitamins and minerals that were lost during processing are added back. Many refined grains are enriched with iron and some B vitamins. An example of an enriched grain is white wheat flour.

Enriched refined grains are still missing some nutrients that are found only in whole grains.

## Are you eating whole grains?

Below are some tips to help you figure out if a food is really a whole grain food.

### Look at the ingredient list

- Choose grain foods that have whole grains listed as the first grain ingredient.
- In the ingredient list, the grains below should have the words **whole** or **whole grain** in front of their name.
  - whole grain whole wheat
  - whole wheat berries
  - whole spelt
  - whole rye
  - whole grain (or hulled) barley
- The grains below don't need the words **whole** or **whole grain** in front of their name. This is because in foods, they are used only as whole grains.
  - amaranth
  - buckwheat
  - bulgur
  - cornmeal
  - cracked wheat
  - kamut
  - millet
  - oats and oatmeal
  - popcorn
  - quinoa
  - sorghum
  - sprouted wheat
  - teff
  - triticale
  - wild or brown rice
- When a food package says the food is whole grain, read the ingredient list to find out for sure. The food might have some whole grains and some refined grains.
- Foods with the following words in the ingredient list may have little or no whole grain.
  - bran
  - degerminated corn meal
  - durum wheat
  - enriched flour
  - multigrain
  - organic flour
  - pearl barley
  - semolina
  - stoneground
  - wheat
  - wheat flour
  - wheat germ

## More tips to find whole grain foods

- Whole wheat bread is made with whole wheat flour. In Canada, whole wheat flour may have much of the germ removed. 100% whole wheat bread may not be whole grain, but is still a healthy choice.



Look for bread and bread products made with whole grain whole wheat.

- Multi-grain foods have more than one kind of grain, but they may not be whole grains. Read the ingredient list to find out if there are any whole grains in the food.
- Barley comes in a few different forms.
  - Pearl barley is a refined grain.
  - Pot barley has some of the bran layer removed.
  - Whole grain (or hulled) barley has the bran, endosperm, and germ.
  - Pot and hulled barley are healthy choices.
- Don't let the colour of the grain food fool you. Just because a food is brown does not mean it's a whole grain. The brown colour could be from added ingredients like molasses.
- The foods listed below are seeds, not grains. They are used like grains and are nutritious:
  - amaranth
  - flax
  - wild rice

## Add whole grain foods to your meals

Whole grains can be eaten on their own, or in foods and recipes like breads, pastas, pilafs, salads, soups, and casseroles.

Below are some easy ways to add whole grains to your day.

### Breakfast

- Try whole grain cereals and bread, buckwheat pancakes and whole grain waffles.
- Enjoy whole grain cereals such as oatmeal, Red River<sup>®</sup>, or millet.

### Lunch

- Use whole grain breads, buns, tortillas, and pitas for your sandwiches.
- Add cooked brown rice, hulled barley, or cooked wheat berries to soups and salads.



### Dinner

- Choose a side dish such as hulled barley, brown or wild rice, quinoa, or millet.
- Try a salad made of cooked hulled barley or cooked quinoa with vegetables.
- Change your pasta from white to whole grain.



### Snacks

- Choose whole grain crackers.
- Enjoy plain air-popped popcorn.
- Stir whole grain cereal into your yogurt.

### Cooking or baking

- In your recipes, replace up to half the refined or white flour with whole grain flour.
- Add cooked brown rice or whole grain bread crumbs to ground meat.
- Use rolled oats in recipes instead of dry bread crumbs.