

K-State Research and Extension News for September 15, 2021

## **Whole Grains Month**

*Submitted by Franny Eastwood, Extension Agent*

September is Whole Grains Month and the Dietary Guidelines recommends that Americans make half their grain intake whole grains. For everyone age 9 and up, this means eating 3-5 servings or more of whole grains every day.

### What Is a Whole Grain?

A whole grain contains all three parts of a kernel--the bran, the endosperm, and the germ. All three parts of the kernel provide the most nutrients. Most grains that are milled, such as wheat, have the germ and the bran removed, and the remaining endosperm is used to make the flour.

### What Are Examples?

Whole wheat, corn, brown rice, wild rice, farro, oats, barley, quinoa, sorghum, spelt, rye, bulgur, millet, and popcorn are whole grains. Whole grains can be whole, cracked, ground, rolled, or flaked kernels, but the mix of endosperm, germ, and bran must match that of the intact grain.

Whole grains supply B vitamins, protein, fiber, magnesium, iron, phosphorus, and vitamin E (in the germ). The fiber is mostly insoluble and is important for keeping you regular. Current scientific evidence shows that whole grains play an important role in lowering the risk of stroke, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity, and some digestive system cancers and helps with weight control.

### What Is a Serving of Whole Grain?

The Dietary Guidelines recommends that Americans consume at least 3 servings of whole-grain foods daily, which adds up to 48 grams of whole grain. A slice of whole grain bread or 1 cup of whole grain ready-to-eat breakfast cereal each equal one serving. Every whole grain in your diet helps, so eat one at every meal!

### How Do I Find These in the Supermarket?

It's not easy. Current food labeling can make it difficult to find the whole grain in a food product. Whole grain does not appear on the Nutrition Facts panel, and the ingredient list does not clearly indicate the amount of whole grain present in a food. Luckily, there are tools you can use to help you choose whole grains at the supermarket.

First, look at the ingredient label. If the first ingredient says "whole X" (e.g., whole-wheat flour, whole oats, whole rye), then that product is more likely to be a whole-grain product.

Second, look for the Whole Grain Stamp on the package. The Whole Grain Stamp appeared on grocery store shelves in mid-2005 and is seen on many products today. The 100 percent stamp lets you know that a food contains a full serving (16 grams) or more of whole grains in each labeled serving and that all the grain is whole grain. There is also a Basic Whole Grain Stamp that you might see on a food product label. This stamp signifies that product contains at least 8 grams, or half a serving, of whole grain

Third, you may find food companies stating the amount of whole grains in a serving of their product or using a whole grain symbol to illustrate foods with whole grains. This will be on the front or top of boxes where you can see it as you shop. This is becoming more common on cereal packages.

### Examine Your Choices

Our most common sources of whole grains are breads, cereals, and crackers. Take a look at the packages in your pantry. How many would qualify as whole grains? If not many, try to replace some of those refined grains with whole grains. Try substituting white rice or pasta with brown rice, wild rice, or whole-wheat pasta. If this is too much of a change, try substituting half of the grain called for in the recipe. For example, if 1 cup of rice is required, try ½ cup white rice and ½ cup brown rice. Experiment with the ancient grains that are making a comeback. These include quinoa, farro, bulgur, millet, spelt, and sorghum. You will find that whole grains are delicious as well as healthy!

### Fiesta Quinoa Salad

Serving size: makes 6 servings

#### Ingredients

- 1 cup quinoa
- 2 cups vegetable broth
- 2 ears corn, roasted and cut off cob (may substitute canned corn)
- 1 red bell pepper, roasted and chopped
- 1 15-ounce can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 3 scallions, sliced (may substitute other mild onion)
- 1/2 cup chopped cilantro
- Juice of 3 limes
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper

#### Directions

1. Put quinoa and broth in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil, cover, and simmer for 15 minutes or until tender.
2. In a large bowl, mix together quinoa, corn, pepper, beans, scallions, and cilantro.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together lime juice, olive oil, and seasonings. Pour over quinoa mixture. Cover and chill for at least 30 minutes to let flavors set.

**Nutrition Content per serving:** 240 calories; 7 g total fat (1 g saturated fat); 460 mg sodium; 37 g carbohydrate; 6 g fiber; 9 g protein.

Recipe courtesy of Oldways and the Whole Grains Council.

Sources: Whole Grains-Healthy Grains, <https://extension.psu.edu/whole-grains-healthy-grains>, Penn State Extension. For more information on nutrition, food safety, health, or family and child development contact the Marais des Cygnes Extension District, or write to [fmeastwo@ksu.edu](mailto:fmeastwo@ksu.edu) or check out our website: [www.maraisdescyignes.k-state.edu](http://www.maraisdescyignes.k-state.edu)