



The Importance of Whole Grains

By Kevin Droney
Culinary Specialist



Not only are *whole grains* healthy,
but they can also be used in
healthy and delicious recipes
that'll leave you asking for more!

WHOLE FOODS
MARKET

Dark Roast Magazine • August 2014



Healthy diet advice

No healthy diet advice seems to be complete without a mention of whole grains. But do we really have a decent amount of knowledge when it comes to understanding the importance of whole grains in our diet? Not only are whole grains healthy, but they can also be used in healthy and delicious recipes that'll leave you asking for more. Even so, for many of us our list of whole grains would end at brown bread and brown rice. But there is so much more to explore and understand about whole grains, says Sunita Roy Chaudhary, Senior Dietician at Rockland Hospital, New Delhi.

Whole grains are any cereal from which the bran has not been removed. Many of the cereal's nutrients are in the covering or the bran. If that is removed during the milling processes much of the nutrients are destroyed.

What are the top 10 whole grain foods which must be included in our daily healthy diet?

1. Wheat
2. Brown Rice
3. Oats
4. Barley
5. Corn
6. Rye
7. Jowar
8. Bajra
9. Ragi
10. Quinoa



How are whole grains better than refined or processed grains?
Whole grains have more nutrients per unit as compared to their refined counterparts.

Whole wheat breads, oats, wheat flakes, corn flakes and quinoa can be used as healthy breakfast cereals. Breads made of rye are also available. Whole wheat pitas and pizza bases are also available nowadays, but make sure you read the label carefully before buying them. Brown rice and ragi can be boiled or steamed and idlis can be made from them.

Popcorn, made from whole wheat, also makes a very tasty and healthy snack. However, make sure you are not adding large quantities of salt, sugar or fatty items in it. Nowadays, many cakes, pastries and pies are available which are made of oats mixed with wheat or other healthy whole grains.

Go for whole wheat pasta. However, if you don't like them too much, try a mixture of whole wheat and refined pasta. Here's how you can make your pasta healthy without ditching your weight loss plan.



Recipes from the Whole Foods Bakery

Chocolate chip cookies can be both delicious and healthy. Believe or not, these chocolate chip cookies made with applesauce, oats, whole wheat flour, chocolate chips and walnuts taste absolutely delicious and actually healthy enough to get some health benefit.



Ingredients

6 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 tablespoons canola oil
½ cup apple sauce
1 ¼ cups brown sugar
2 large eggs
½ tablespoon vanilla extract
1 cup whole wheat flour
¼ cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
2 ½ cups rolled oats
1 ¼ cups chocolate chips
¾ cup chopped walnuts

Directions

Preheat the oven 325 degrees F.
In a large bowl with an electric mixer, add butter, canola oil, apple sauce, and brown sugar, beat until smooth.
Beat eggs one at a time, stir in vanilla.
In another bowl, add the flour, baking soda, and salt, and mix well.
Add the flour mixture into the butter-applesauce mixture, stir until just incorporated.
Stir in oats, chocolate chips, and walnuts.
Drop by spoonfuls onto ungreased baking sheets.
Bake for about 13 minutes.
Let cookies cool on the baking sheet for a few minutes.
Transfer the cookies onto wire racks and cool completely.
Store in an air-tight container for up to 1 week.

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The Science of Wheat Bread

Scientists announced Thursday that they are approaching a milestone in humanity's ability to improve bread wheat. One of the most common and most versatile crops on the planet — the main food staple for a third of the world population — wheat is remarkably good at adapting to change. But efforts to grow higher-yielding, more nutritious and more resilient wheat in response to population growth and climate change have been slow for one simple reason. Its genes are a big, complicated mess.

Many scientists thought that it would be impossible to map the genome of wheat — to figure out how its genes are ordered so that specific traits can be more quickly identified. But a group made up of scientists, breeders and growers say that they're more than halfway there and that an entire sequence is on the horizon.

Genome sequencing has revolutionized the process of breeding corn and rice, experts said, and is especially important given the stress that climate change will put on the food supply as the world's population booms.

"Human civilization rests on a small handful of crops, all of which were developed with much more stable weather conditions than we see now,"

said Patrick Schnable, an Iowa State University professor who worked on the genome sequencing of corn. "In a world with

climate change, we need to help those crops adapt quickly." And to do that,

he said, one needs the genome sequence. INRA researcher

Frédéric Choulet works on his findings. Scientists thought the

bread-wheat genome was too complex to decode, until now.

(Christophe Maitre/INRA)

"I was told by a breeder that it was the single most valuable thing the

government has ever done for them," Schnable said. The genetic information has

been used to increase crop yields and make crops

more resilient to stresses such as pests and weather change.



Refined Bread... It's Everywhere

It is obvious to most of us that a piece of white Wonder Bread is refined and therefore not whole wheat and lacking in nutritional value. However, in America, virtually everything is "white" bread unless otherwise specified: french baguette, ciabatta, focaccia, tortillas, hot dog and hamburger buns, and crackers. Even breads labeled "whole wheat" usually contain white (refined) flour as well and are merely supplemented with some whole wheat flour. It is imperative to read the label and see "100% whole wheat flour" and no mention of "enriched," "bleached" or "unbleached," flour is there. To make it simple: if it doesn't say "whole," it has been refined. Even home-made breads or bread fresh from the bakery is made with white flour unless otherwise noted.

"Whole Wheat" and "Whole Grain" as a Marketing Scheme

Whole wheat and whole grain have become terms that automatically mean "healthy" to most consumers. However, as stated before, many breads labeled "whole wheat" are mixed with a hefty amount of white flour as well. "Whole grain" is a somewhat meaningless term in the world of conventional bread; they may have added some "whole" grains (like rye) to the bread, but those grains could still be surrounded by white, refined flour. Again, check the ingredients, and when something claims to be "whole wheat," truly investigate that is made only with whole wheat flour. Sometimes breads are even dyed to appear darker in color and look healthier.

How To Find A Good Bread

After ensuring you find a bread that is made exclusively from whole wheat flour, there are other things to look for. Breads often include the harmful additives high fructose corn syrup or trans fats known as partially hydrogenated oils which should be avoided at all costs. I suggest avoiding added sweeteners like honey or molasses as well as they are not necessary for making a great-tasting bread. And, a general rule of thumb: don't buy something with a lengthy list of ingredients you can't pronounce. Things labeled "to retain freshness" is their kind way of saying chemical preservatives. None of these things make for a healthy choice. It is the easiest to find whole wheat breads devoid of these additives at health food stores or natural markets. Chain grocery stores do not make it easy, but at health food stores you'll have a number of choices. Bread is not a food that was originally designed to stay fresh for a week at room temperature. Real bread made from the whole grain is so nutrient dense that it spoils easily and usually does better in the refrigerator.



All About Bread: Beyond Whole Wheat

by Emily Davidson

I'm sure most of us couldn't imagine a life without bread: sandwiches, toast, bread baskets, bread bowls, and so forth. It is an integral part of our food culture and seems to be a major player in every meal. However, with the rise of low carb diets, the concept of "good carbs" and "bad carbs," plus the new offerings of "whole wheat" everything, it's easy to get confused about which breads are healthy and which are not.

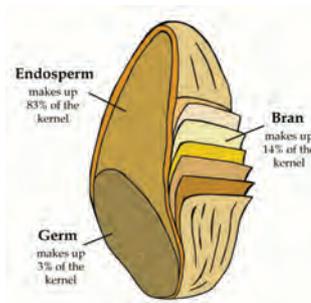
All the bread I'll be talking about here and pretty much all commercial bread is wheat bread, meaning it is made from wheat. Some people confused "whole wheat" with "wheat," but all regular bread is made from wheat. The difference is the refining and manipulation of the wheat grain.

Bread Making in America

However, in order to make white bread, these outer layers are removed, stripping the wheat of most of its nutrients. What's left is the mealy endosperm, containing no real vitamins or minerals. In order to replace some of what is lost, factories and bread manufacturers "enrich" their breads with arbitrary amounts of chemically synthesized vitamins. The fiber is not replaced. What is left is a product devoid of the natural nutrition of the wheat grain in order to make it more soft and fluffy. However, it doesn't stop there. Commercial bread manufacturers then add a plethora of chemicals and additives in order to make the bread shelf stable and cosmetically pleasing. This refinement process, besides removing vital nutrients, makes bread very high on the glycemic index. This means it causes rapid blood sugar crashes and basically converts into your body as sugar. Refined bread is also higher in calories because the endosperm, the most caloric part of the grain, is most prominent.

Wheat Background

A grain kernel consists of three parts: the innermost germ, the endosperm that surrounds the germ, and the bran that envelopes both. Most of the kernel's nutrients are locked into the germ and bran. Whole grain products, therefore, provide us with the full nutrient content of the grain kernel. A whole grain kernel contains all the vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals required to nourish the body and promote good health. Refined foods enriched with synthetic vitamins and minerals offer little by comparison.



Whole Grain Kernel