

We'd never limit ourselves to just one type of fruit or vegetable. But when it comes to whole grains, we tend to stick with what's familiar: a bowl of oatmeal for breakfast, whole wheat bread for our sandwich or the occasional scoop of brown rice alongside chicken and vegetables.

Not that eating lots of oatmeal, whole wheat bread or brown rice is bad—far from it. All whole grains are a good source of belly-filling fiber, which might explain why one major review found that people who eat them have less body fat than people who don't. Research also shows that diets rich in whole grains are associated with reduced risk for diabetes, high cholesterol, heart disease and depression as well as colon and breast cancer.



EAT THE GRAINBOW

Prevent diabetes and other chronic conditions by expanding your whole grain horizons. These new additions to your repertoire aren't just healthy—they're tasty.

By Marygrace Taylor

But just as it's smart to eat a colorful variety of fresh produce, it's also a good idea to eat plenty of different whole grains. "The nutritional composition of broccoli is not the same as the nutritional composition of peas. And the same stands true for different whole grains," says Nicola McKeown, Ph.D., director of nutritional epidemiology at Tufts University.

That's not all. Eating the same old brown rice or whole wheat pasta can be as boring as wearing the same outfit every day. By switch-

ing things up, we can keep meals interesting—and stay more motivated to continue making healthy choices.

"While they're all versatile and healthy, different types of whole grains offer a chance to explore a variety of textures, shapes and flavors," says Frances Largeman-Roth, R.D.,

WHOLE GRAINS VS. REFINED GRAINS

You probably know that foods like bread, pasta, rice and cereals are made from grains, but do you know what makes a product "whole grain"? Every grain kernel contains three parts: the bran, germ and endosperm. Refined grains—white flour, bread and pasta—have been processed to remove the bran and germ, which also removes some of the fiber and vitamins. Whole grains contain all three parts and pack a more powerful nutritional punch, so they should make up at least half of your grain consumption, says the USDA.

Pull Out & Save!

food and nutrition expert and author of *Eating in Color*.

Where should you start? Right here. Each of these grains is versatile and tasty—and offers something surprising and unique in the nutritional department.

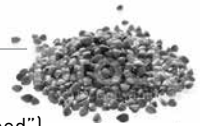
Amaranth



Why it's great: It's one of the best whole grain sources of magnesium, a mineral that plays an important role in regulating blood pressure. "It's also good for overall muscle health and helps your muscles relax after exercise," says Kelly Toups, R.D., program manager of the Whole Grains Council.

How to eat it: Sweet and mild, tiny amaranth grains (which are technically classified as seeds) cook up like a thick, creamy porridge that's delicious topped with sautéed spinach. "It's part of the spinach family, so it goes well with greens," says chef Robin Asbell, author of *The Whole Grain Promise*.

Buckwheat



Why it's great: To do good by your gut, eat more of this fluffy, dark red grain. Buckwheat delivers pre-biotics, a type of fiber that feeds the probiotic (or "good") bacteria in your belly, supporting healthy digestion, says Toups.

How to eat it: Look for toasted buckwheat groats—their rich nuttiness goes well with other intense flavors. Asbell recommends adding the uncooked groats to chocolate cookie batters for added crunch, or serving cooked buckwheat with caramelized onions and a dollop of sour cream.

Barley



Why it's great: At 6 g of fiber per cooked cup, barley packs more roughage than almost any other whole grain. Some of that fiber comes in the form of beta-glucans, an important type of soluble fiber that may play a role in preventing weight gain and high cholesterol, as well as high blood sugar and diabetes. "Most grains provide insoluble fiber, but soluble fiber like beta-glucans can slow digestion and bind with cholesterol inside the small intestine to help it exit the body," Toups says.

How to eat it: Mild and quick-cooking, pearl barley is ideal for adding to soups. "It's great at absorbing flavors, so use a nice flavorful stock like beef or mushroom," says Asbell.

Kamut



Why it's great: This ancient strain of wheat is surprisingly high in protein, which helps you stay fuller longer and plays a role in building and maintaining muscle mass, Toups says. In fact, a cup of cooked Kamut packs nearly 10 g of protein.

How to eat it: Sweet, buttery and chewy, Kamut can hold its own in grain salads with other hearty ingredients—like nuts or dried fruit, Asbell says.

Rye

Why it's great: Fruits and vegetables aren't the only places to find the antioxidants that fight damaging free radicals in the body. Rye is rich in polyphenols, a family of antioxidants that may play a role in preventing heart disease and cancer.



How to eat it: Try swapping up to 1/3 cup of the wheat flour in baked goods for sweet rye flour, says Asbell. Rye flour retains its antioxidant activity even after baking, Toups says. (So you really *can* have your cake and eat it too.)

Teff

Why it's great: Not all grains pack a calcium punch, but tiny teff does, says Toups. A cup of the cooked stuff delivers more than 120 mg of this bone builder—about equal to what you'd find in half a cup of cooked spinach.



How to eat it: Teff has a sweet, molasses-like flavor and a creamy texture that can help thicken soups and stews. "You could add it to chili or to a chunky sweet potato and tomato soup," Asbell says.

Go Grain Shopping

You don't have to hit an exotic health food store for a wide variety of grains—many major manufacturers are beginning to include them in cereals, bars, crackers and rice blends. Here are a few of our easy-to-find favorites.



Cheerios + Ancient Grains

In a 110-calorie bowl, you'll get a dose of crunchy quinoa/oat clusters, puffed spelt and Kamut.



Kirkland Signature Ancient Grains Crackers

Teff is just one of the six whole grains in these tasty crackers from Costco's in-house brand.



Kashi Organic Promise Sprouted Grains Cereal

Oats, barley, amaranth and more make up this low-fat breakfast pick.



Seeds of Change Seven Whole Grains

Swap out plain old rice for this pilaf blend made of barley, quinoa, bulgur, rye and other whole grains, available at major grocery stores.

Quaker Super Grains Apples & Cinnamon Instant Hot Cereal

This filling breakfast contains 7 g of protein, thanks to oats, barley, rye, quinoa and flax.



Visit Parade.com/grainbow to learn how to sneak more whole grains into your diet.