



GLUTEN  
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# Gluten-Free Grains

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The gluten-free diet requires total avoidance of the grains wheat, barley, rye and all varieties and hybrids of these grains, such as spelt. However, there are many wonderful gluten-free grains\* to enjoy.

## Amaranth

Once the sacred food of the Aztecs, amaranth is high in protein, calcium, iron, and fiber. Toasting this tiny grain before cooking brings out its nutty flavor.

*Makes a delicious, creamy hot breakfast cereal. Serve with fruit of choice on top and/or a touch of maple syrup.*

## Rice

Rice comes in many varieties: short grain, long grain, jasmine and basmati to name a few. Long grain rice tends to be fluffier while short grain rice is stickier. Rice also comes in various colors: black, purple, brown, and red. These colorful un-refined rices contribute more nutritional benefits than does refined white rice and have subtly unique flavors and textures too. Wild rice is another different and delicious option.

*Versatile rice leftovers can go in many directions. Add to salads or sautéed vegetables; make rice pancakes or rice pudding; season and use as filling for baked green peppers or winter squash.*

## Buckwheat

Despite the name, buckwheat is a gluten-free member of the rhubarb family. Roasted buckwheat is called kasha. Buckwheat is high in B Vitamins, fiber, iron, magnesium, phosphorous and zinc.

*Buckwheat has an earthy, nutty, slightly bitter taste. Experiment with using the cooked grain (buckwheat "groats", or "kasha" which is the toasted version) as you would rice. Buckwheat flour makes delicious crepes and pancakes.*

## Cornmeal, Polenta, Grits, Hominy

Polenta is cooked yellow cornmeal that can either be served as a creamy smooth side dish, or left to set and served in wedges. Grits are a cornmeal made from white corn, and commonly (but not always) have had the germ and bran of the kernel removed. Hominy is a form of whole grain corn that has been processed to give it an almost bean-like or meaty texture. Corn is a rich source of complex carbohydrates and B vitamins.

*Use cooked, cooled, firmed-up polenta in place of lasagna noodles.*

## Millet

Millet is a tasty and versatile nutrient-dense grain that is worth getting familiar with, even though you may know it best as an ingredient in birdseed. Millet is high in B vitamins, phosphorous, magnesium, and higher in protein than corn and rice.

*Cooked millet makes an appealing side dish with a fluffy texture and mild flavor.*

Amaranth

Buckwheat

Cornmeal,  
Polenta, Grits,  
Hominy

Millet

Oats

Quinoa

Rice

Sorghum

Teff

## Oats\*\*

In addition to classic oat flakes, oats come in “steel cut” form too (also known as Irish oats). These have a very different and delicious chewier texture and nuttier flavor. Both varieties can be used in sweet as well as savory dishes, and are a good source of protein and fiber.

*Make your own muesli by mixing oat flakes with your favorite nuts, seeds and dried fruits. Muesli traditionally uses raw oats, but you may also like toasting your oats first. Muesli options: add milk the night before or right before eating for different textures. Have it hot or cold.*

## Quinoa

Technically a grass, quinoa is related to spinach. Quinoa is native to South America and comes in several color varieties. Quinoa is high in protein, fiber, Vitamin E, magnesium, iron, phosphorous, copper and zinc.

*Quinoa can be used much like rice. Always rinse quinoa before cooking to remove the “saponins”, a natural bitter coating.*

## Sorghum

Unlike other grains, sorghum contains high amounts of anthocyanins, a powerful antioxidant also found in blueberries. This grain is also a good source of fiber, B Vitamins, iron, and potassium.

*Sorghum has an appealing chewy texture and nutty flavor. Works well as a substitute for couscous.*

## Teff

A tiny grain with a sweet flavor. Teff is high in protein, calcium, iron, copper and zinc. Teff is traditionally used as flour but can also be cooked whole and used as a side dish.

*Teff's tiny size means it cooks up like a porridge and makes a nice hot cereal option.*

\* Although commonly known as “grains”, botanically speaking some of these foods (amaranth, quinoa, buckwheat) are technically “pseudocereals.” They have come to be known as grains because they are used similarly, and their nutrition profiles are generally similar.

\*\*The safest oat products are those that have been certified gluten-free. While products labeled gluten-free should comply with the FDA definition of containing no more than 20 ppm of gluten, this is not third-party verified. GFCO’s standard for gluten-free is 10 ppm of gluten or less.

## How to Cook Whole Grains

Type of Grain	Water (or broth) per 1 cup grain	Basic Cooking Method
Amaranth	2.5-3 cups	Combine seeds with two and a half cups water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for up to 20 minutes, until grains are fluffy and water is absorbed. For a porridge-like consistency, use slightly more water (three cups for one cup of grain) and cook a little longer. You can also “pop” amaranth like corn; simply preheat a pot or skillet over high heat (must be very hot), and add amaranth seeds one or two tablespoons at a time (adding too many seeds at once can cause them to burn). Continuously stir the seeds with a spoon as they pop, and once mostly popped, quickly remove from pan. Repeat with more seeds if desired. Popped amaranth can be enjoyed on its own or served with milk and fruit for a healthy breakfast.

Type of Grain	Water (or broth) per 1 cup grain	Basic Cooking Method
Buckwheat	2 cups	For raw buckwheat groats, toasting is highly recommended to lend a pleasant, nutty taste. (You can also buy buckwheat groats pre-toasted, in which case they will be labeled "kasha.") To toast: place groats in dry pan over medium heat, stirring for five minutes, until browned. Whether you're preparing kasha or untoasted buckwheat groats, place in a pot with water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, and simmer until tender. Cook un-toasted buckwheat approximately 20-30 minutes. Cook kasha 15-20 minutes.
Millet	2 cups	Combine millet and water; bring to a boil, reduce heat & simmer. If you leave it alone as it cooks, you'll get fluffy grains like rice; if you stir frequently and add a little extra liquid during cooking, you'll get a dish that resembles mashed potatoes. Cooking time: approximately 25 minutes.
Oats	2 cups for flakes 3 cups for steel cut	Bring liquid to boil with a pinch of salt; add oats, reduce to low and cook for about 10 minutes for flakes, and 15-20 minutes for steel cut. Stir occasionally.
Polenta	3 cups	Place water in a large pot. Bring to a boil and add ½ - 1 tsp. salt. Reduce heat to medium low. Sprinkle one third of the polenta into the pot. Use a wooden spoon to stir it into the water. The polenta and water should form a paste after about two minutes. Add the remaining polenta to the pot. Keep stirring for about ten minutes. Polenta is ready when the texture becomes creamy. Don't overcook the polenta, or it may become too mushy.
Quinoa	2 cups	While it's best to rinse all grains before cooking, pre-washing is especially advisable for quinoa in order to remove the bitter saponin coating on its outer hull that sometimes remains after processing. To do so, simply run cold water over quinoa in fine-meshed strainer, rubbing the seeds with your fingers. (Avoid soaking quinoa, however, as saponins can leach into the seeds.) After rinsing, place quinoa and water in a pot, bring to a boil and cover. Reduce heat and simmer for about 15 minutes, until the grains become translucent and the germ appears as a thin white ring around each grain. Fluff with a fork.
Sorghum	3 cups	For a great side dish, begin by toasting your sorghum in a dry pan until it's slightly fragrant and golden. This will enhance the complexity of its nutty flavor. Then, cook the grain with water for about 50 minutes, until tender.  You can also pop sorghum. (Note that some types of sorghum pop better than others.) Just pour a layer of dried grain in the bottom of a pan with a little oil, cover, turn on the heat and wait until you hear light little pings speed up and then slowdown in the pot.

Type of Grain	Water (or broth) per 1 cup grain	Basic Cooking Method
Teff	3 cups	Combine teff and water in a pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer for about 20 minutes, until water is absorbed. You may stir occasionally towards the end of cooking.
Wild Rice	3 cups	Place wild rice and water in a pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 40-50 minutes. Fluff with a fork before serving.
Whole Grain Rice (Brown, Black, Purple, Red)	2 ¼ cups	Bring water to a rolling boil. Add rice. Reduce to a simmer, cover with tightly fitting lid and cook for 40-50 minutes until water is absorbed; turn off heat and let sit 5-10 minutes. Prior to serving, fluff with a fork.

## Cooking Tips for Whole Grains:

### Rinse before cooking!

Always rinse grains thoroughly under cool running water to remove debris.

### For fluffier grains:

Toast the grain first in a dry skillet over a burner for a couple of minutes until the grain starts to give off a nutty aroma or pop.

### For stickier grains:

Add the grains directly to cold water before bringing to a boil.

This educational bulletin has been produced by the Gluten Intolerance Group of North America, a registered 501(c)3 organization. Learn more about GIG at [www.gluten.org](http://www.gluten.org).

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