



The Be Fit Minute

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GOING GLUTEN-FREE WITH WHOLE GRAINS

Going gluten-free doesn't mean you have to forgo flavor. There are many gluten-free grains that are tasty, easy to prepare, and offer numerous health benefits. In fact, these grains are nutrition superstars, as they are higher in protein, fiber, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants compared to their refined counterparts (like white flour). Though new to the U.S., these healthy grains are tried-and-true staples all across the world: so give them a try.

Gluten-Free Whole Grains

Amaranth:

Amaranth has been deemed the “caviar of whole grains,” as it is similar in texture and retains a slight crunchiness when cooked. It also has more protein than many other whole grains (double the protein found in brown rice) and is an excellent source of fiber (5 grams per cup).

Millet:

It can be prepared to be fluffy, like rice pilaf, or creamy, like polenta. Millet's mild flavor makes it easy to pair with a variety of foods. It is also high in magnesium, which helps promote a healthy heart and is necessary for your muscles and nerves to function. Millet is also thought to contain high levels of antioxidants, which are important for disease prevention and help your body fight aging.

Quinoa:

With its nutty, slightly earthy taste quinoa provides a flavorful addition to your plate. Like amaranth, it contains more protein than many other grains. In fact, it is one of the only plant-based sources of protein that contains all the essential amino acids your body needs. It is a good source of potassium, which promotes healthy blood pressure. It is also high in manganese, necessary for your body to protect its cells; it may also fight aging, by combating damage caused by the environment.

Buckwheat:

Buckwheat has been used in French, Russian and Japanese cultures for centuries. Buckwheat flour can be used as a substitute for all purpose flour in quick bread recipes, such as banana bread. Kasha (which is a buckwheat grain kernel that has been roasted) cooks easily and is slightly lower in calories than many other whole grains. Buckwheat also offers up extra protection, as it contains zinc, which is necessary to keep your immune system healthy. Buckwheat may also help promote colon health by feeding the good bacteria in your gut.

Teff:

Described as having a hazelnut or chestnut-like flavor, this grain is a staple in Ethiopia and is used to make their national bread, injera, a sourdough-flavored flatbread. Teff is also often prepared as porridge and is an excellent source of fiber.

Stone-Ground Cornmeal (or Polenta):

Look for stone-ground cornmeal, as this means the grain has its nutrient-packed hull and germ still intact (these parts of the grain are typically removed with most brands of cornmeal or polenta). Stone-ground cornmeal often has double the fiber compared to regular cornmeal. Don't be fooled, the color of the cornmeal doesn't matter: it just indicates the color of corn kernel used.

Tips on How to Get More Whole Grains:

- Instead of rice pilaf, try making a pilaf from amaranth, millet, or quinoa. Prepare the grain according to the directions on the package and simply add in your favorite pilaf seasonings.
- Millet can lend creaminess to dishes: blend it with cauliflower as a nutrient-packed alternative to mashed potatoes.
- Short on time? Quinoa cooks in less than 15 minutes, making it an easy, quick alternative to pasta.
- Try making pancakes or muffins from scratch and use buckwheat flour in place of all purpose flour.
- Kasha (roasted buckwheat kernels) can be made into a simple side dish in about 20 minutes. While the kasha cooks, sauté an onion and some mushrooms; add the kasha once it is finished cooking for a simple, savory side.
- Use a 100% buckwheat soba noodle (such as Eden Foods) in place of “regular” noodles.
- Teff can be eaten for breakfast, as it is similar to cream of wheat when cooked. Top it with honey and dried fruit or prepare it like you would polenta or grits for a quick side dish; it cooks in less than 30 minutes.

Brands to Look For:

Arrowhead Mills; Bob's Red Mill; Hodgson Mill; Eden Foods

Need a Gluten-Free Substitute for All Purpose Flour? Try Bob's Red Mill's gluten-free all purpose flour.

It combines potato starch and garbanzo, tapioca, sorghum, and fava bean flours and can be substituted 1:1 in recipes that call for all purpose flour. It is also a good source of fiber.

A QUICK NUTRIENT GUIDE TO GLUTEN-FREE GRAINS



Amaranth

1 cup cooked = 250 calories (and 9 grams of protein)

Nutrients of note: It provides 10% of your calcium and 25% of your recommended intake of iron for the day



Millet

1 cup cooked = 200 calories

Nutrients of note: It provides 20% of your recommended daily intake of magnesium (as much as 1 ounce of nuts)



Quinoa

1 cup cooked = 225 calories (and 8 grams of protein)

Nutrients of note: It provides over 50% of your daily requirement for manganese, 10% for potassium, and 15% for iron



Kasha (roasted buckwheat kernels)

1 cup cooked kasha = 155 calories

Nutrients of note: It provides 10% your recommended daily intake for iron and 7% for zinc



1 cup cooked teff = 255 calories

Nutrients of note: It provides 10% of your daily dose of calcium and over 25% of your recommended intake for both iron and fiber