

Whole Grains 101

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In today's search for health and wellness, it's hard to beat whole grains. Whole grains are packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber, and phytochemicals that you just don't find in plain old white bread, processed cereals, rice, or non-whole wheat products. Besides nutrition, whole grains are loaded with flavor. They're versatile, too – guaranteed to fit into the adventurous and perhaps not-so-adventurous diner's diet. Here...FCHS' guide to some less traditional whole grains, how to use them, what to look for, and why we should be giving them a try.

Grain	Facts & Figures	Flavor Basics & Shopping Tips	Serving Suggestions (Easy ideas for adding them to your diet.)
Amaranth 	<p>A high-protein grain that's also a good source of fiber and vitamin E.</p>	<p>Amaranth seeds have a pleasant, peppery flavor.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amaranth flour is higher in fat than wheat flour, resulting in a moist bread. Replace no more than 1/4 of the flour in a bread recipe with this. • Some varieties of amaranth seeds can be popped much like popcorn! • More commonly, amaranth is boiled and eaten as a cereal, or used in soups and granolas. • When cooking, use 1 cup amaranth to 3 cups water and cook for 25-30 minutes. Yields 2 ½ cups.
Kamut 	<p>Most people with wheat allergies tolerate kamut but this is a type of wheat and it contains gluten.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kamut flour works well in pasta and bread recipes. It works best if combined with other flours. • To cook the whole grain, combine 1 cup raw kamut with 3-4 cups water and cook 1 hour. Yields 2 ½ cups.
Kasha  <p>Healthy Kasha & Bow Tie Pasta</p>	<p>Although, technically, kasha is a fruit (the roasted seed of the buckwheat plant), the food world classifies it as a grain.</p> <p>Excellent source of magnesium and a good source of copper and fiber. Like amaranth, it is rich in lysine, an amino acid that is often missing from grain foods.</p>	<p>Kasha (or, buckwheat groats) comes in whole, coarse, medium, and fine consistency.</p> <p>It has a hearty, nutty flavor and chewy texture.</p> <p>Purchase roasted in a medium or coarse grain for easiest preparation.</p> <p>You can purchase kasha flour. Or, make your own by pulverizing whole white buckwheat groats in a food processor or blender until they have the consistency of flour.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole kasha can be prepared in 15 minutes; the more refined grades are even quicker. • To prepare, simmer 1 part kasha per 2 parts salted water for 15 minutes. • Kasha makes an exceptionally flavorful pilaf when prepared with caramelized or browned onions and mushrooms. • Also a great cold-weather warmer when served hot. • Or, create a hearty salad with kasha and vegetables, and pair it with a light soup. • Kasha flour is especially good in pancakes and pasta, giving them a stronger, heavier taste. It makes tasty biscuits and muffins, too. • When using kasha flour in baking, replace up to half of the wheat flour in any recipe with this. For breads, replace up to 1/5 of the wheat flour in a bread recipe with Kasha flour.

continued on page 5

