

# Global Grains

## Grain Characteristics

## Suggested Uses & Preparation

**AMARANTH** This tiny seed was an important food source in the Aztec culture. Beige in color, with a woody flavor, the texture of this cooked grain is similar to cornmeal. It's gluten-free and high in protein, calcium, phosphorus, iron and fiber, as well as the amino acids lysine and methionine which are often lacking in grains.

Substitute for up to  $\frac{1}{4}$  the wheat flour in baked goods. Cooked amaranth may be eaten as a hot cereal, combined with other grains or added to bread, muffin or pancake batters. It becomes translucent as it cooks. **PREPARE:** add 1 cup amaranth to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cups boiling water. Cook 20 minutes. Add salt after cooking. Yields 2 cups.

**BARLEY** Pearled or unhulled is best. Often combined with other grains, excellent in stews, soups, hot cereals and casseroles. In ancient Egypt, barley was used for food, jewelry and currency. In the US, 90% goes to brew beer or feed animals. Good source of fiber, iron and B vitamins.

Try with grain salads using red onions, cucumber and summer savory. Good as a stuffing for peppers, tomatoes or poultry. Use in low-fat veggie loaves with beans, TVP and spices. **PREPARE:** add 1 cup barley to 2 cups water. Simmer 60-75 minutes.

**BUCKWHEAT** Not a true grain, but rather the seeds of a plant related to rhubarb. Contains high-quality protein, B vitamins, vitamin E, iron and calcium. Hulled, toasted buckwheat, or kasha, is available whole and cracked. Reddish-brown, with a robust earthy flavor. It's gluten-free!

Cooked kasha is excellent in pilafs, stuffings, croquettes, burgers and knishes or combined with potatoes, vegetables or pasta. **PREPARE:** add 1 cup buckwheat to 2 cups boiling, salted water. Cover and cook 10-12 minutes. Yields  $3\frac{1}{2}$  cups.

**KAMUT** A distant relative of wheat, this ancient Egyptian grain contains 40 percent more protein than modern hybridized wheat and may be less allergenic. The whole kernels resemble large, golden grains of rice. Rich and buttery, chewy in texture, it's also available in oatmeal-like rolled flakes.

Kamut flour may be substituted for wheat flour in most recipes. Use cooked whole grain in salads and pilafs instead of brown rice. **PREPARE:** soak 1 cup Kamut kernels overnight in cold water. Drain and add to 3 cups boiling, salted water. Cook 30-40 minutes. Yields 2 cups.

**MILLET** Small and yellow, this bead-like grain contains a high-quality protein. In Africa, China and India, it's a dietary staple. A good source of potassium, magnesium, phosphorus and B vitamins, it's less allergenic than wheat and corn and naturally alkaline, which means it's easy to digest.

Cooked whole millet has a mild nutty flavor and fluffy texture. It's delicious in salads, pilafs and croquettes or tossed with pasta. Add cooked millet to muffin and pancake batters. **PREPARE:** add 1 cup millet to 2 cups boiling, salted water. Cook 30 minutes. Yields 4 cups.

**QUINOA** Actually an herb, this disk-shaped seed was once a staple of the Inca culture. Quinoa contains 50% more protein than other grains as well as higher levels of phosphorus, iron and B vitamins. It's gluten free, easy to digest and has a delicate flavor and light texture.

Substitute for  $\frac{1}{4}$  the wheat flour in most baked goods. Try cooked, whole quinoa in salads, soups, stews, pilafs, burgers and as a substitute for rice. Rinse quinoa thoroughly before cooking to remove its bitter, soap-like coating. **PREPARE:** add 1 cup quinoa to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups boiling, salted water. Cover and simmer 15 min. Yields  $3\frac{1}{2}$  cups.

**RICE** Rice is the most consumed food in the world; there are more than 7,000 varieties grown and it is eaten by millions of people at every meal. When choosing a rice, keep in mind that long grain rice cooks up dry and fluffy and is good in curries, pilafs and paella. Short grain rice is more tender and sticky and is good for Japanese-style food, breakfast cereals, puddings and casseroles. Mixing different lengths can add textural interest to any dish.



## Grain Cookery

*Wholesome, delicious, versatile and economical, whole grains have sustained and nourished the world for thousands of years! As we seek out affordable, adaptable ways to create simple, enticing, healthful meals, grains are the place to start for most any meal. Most grains require 20-60 minutes of cooking.*

### Basic grain cooking instructions:

**Rinse:** Before you cook grains (except most rice) rinse them thoroughly in cold water until the water runs clear. Strain them to remove any dirt or debris.

**Presoaking (optional):** Reduce cooking time, increase digestibility, and save energy by soaking hard grains overnight, or for 6-8 hours. Cook them in their soaking water.

**Boil/Simmer:** As a general rule, bring water to a boil, add grains and return to a boil. Then reduce heat and simmer, covered tightly, until done. Resist the urge to lift the cover – the momentum of the steam will be lost. Use broth or fruit juice instead of water for flavoring.

**Test:** Test grains for doneness – most whole grains are slightly chewy when cooked.

**Fluff:** Many grains benefit from fluffing. When grains are done cooking, remove from the heat and gently lift and separate them with a fork. Re-cover and allow to sit for 5-10 minutes before serving.

**Abundant Water Technique Option:** Use double the water to cook grains until they are soft, then drain in a colander.

**Easy Alternate Method:** Put grain in pan. Add water to approximately 1 ½ inches above the surface of the grain. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to as low as you can. When water is gone, grain is cooked.

**Invest in a Rice Cooker (available at discount stores):** Pour the grain into the cooker, add 1-2 inches water above the surface of the grain. Add seasonings if desired – push the “button”. Grain is cooked, no need to worry about burning or watching the grain!

### Flavor tips:

1. Use broth instead of water
2. Cook with approximately 2 inches square of Kombu (sea vegetable), remove at end of cooking, for improved digestibility and nutrients.
3. Add dried soup mixes or spices to flavor grain
4. Add raisins to sweeten grain

### Grainy Ideas:

1. Hot cereal
2. Side dishes
3. Grain salads, with added vegetables.  
Served hot or cold
4. Add precooked (or canned, drained) beans (lentils, navy, black-eyed peas, etc) to grain, just before serving (adds protein, flavor, and enables you to confidently eliminate the meat from your meal).