



# Gluten-Free Grains

*Updated May 2016*

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 whole grains that can be enjoyed. Adding these grains can also add nutrients which are often low in gluten-free diets. Here are some to try.

## **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.

*TRY IT: Add to soups as a thickener or serve cooked with berries.*

## **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. Brown rice is highest in the B vitamins of all grains.

*TRY IT: Add leftover rice to cold salads.*

## **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.

*TRY IT: Buckwheat flour can be used to make delicious crepes.*

## **Cornmeal, Polenta, Grits**

Polenta is cooked cornmeal that can either be served moist as a porridge or left to set and served in wedges. Grits are cornmeal that have had the germ and bran of the kernel removed. Corn is a rich source of complex carbohydrates, B vitamins, and iron.

*TRY IT: Cooked Polenta makes a great alternative to pizza crust – add vegetables, tomato sauce, and bake.*

## **Millet**

Best known as a main ingredient in birdseed, millet is also a versatile nutrient-dense grain. Millet is high in B vitamins, phosphorous, magnesium, and higher in protein than corn and rice.

*TRY IT: As a hot breakfast cereal topped with peaches.*

## **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.

*TRY IT: Serve quinoa in a traditional salad with corn, tomatoes, bell peppers, and kidney beans.*

Amaranth

Brown Rice

Buckwheat

Cornmeal  
(fine grind)/  
Hominy

Cornmeal  
(course grind)/  
Polenta, Grits

Millet

Quinoa

Sorghum

Teff

## 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.

*TRY IT: Sorghum flour mixes well with most other gluten-free flours in baking.*

## 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.

*TRY IT: Cook teff on the stovetop and use as a hot breakfast cereal or a seasoned side dish.*

## How to Cook Whole Grains

Type of Grain	Water (or broth) per 1 cup grain	Basic Cooking Method
<b>Amaranth</b>	<b>2.5-3 cups</b>	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.
<b>Buckwheat</b>	<b>2 cups</b>	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.
<b>Polenta</b>	<b>3 cups</b>	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.
<b>Quinoa</b>	<b>2 cups</b>	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.

Type of Grain	Water (or broth) per 1 cup grain	Basic Cooking Method
<b>Millet</b>	<b>2 cups</b>	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.
<b>Whole Grain Rice</b> (Brown, Black, Purple, Red)	<b>2 ¼ cups</b>	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.
<b>Sorghum</b>	<b>3 cups</b>	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.
<b>Teff</b>	<b>3 cups</b>	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.
<b>Wild Rice</b>	<b>3 cups</b>	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.

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This information should not be used to diagnose or treat gluten-related disorders or other medical conditions. For questions about these conditions consult your healthcare team when considering this information.

Please consider your local GIG support group as another resource.

Gluten Intolerance Group (GIG)  
31214 – 124th Ave. S.E.  
Auburn, WA 98092-3667

Phone: 253-833-6655  
Fax: 253-833-6675

[www.GLUTEN.org](http://www.GLUTEN.org)  
[customerservice@GLUTEN.org](mailto:customerservice@GLUTEN.org)

The Mission of the Gluten Intolerance Group is to empower the gluten-free community through consumer support, advocacy and education.

To make a donation or become a volunteer to GIG, visit our website or call the office at 253-833-6655.

#### **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.

##### **No need to stir!**

Once water is boiling, turn heat down to low, cover, and let cook until you can tip the pot and no liquid comes to the surface.

*This article has been assessed and approved by a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist.*