

Whole Grains Are Not Just for Horses

My sister accuses me of eating horse food. You know them, whole grains like barley, brown rice, cracked wheat, oats and wild rice. She's right, I do prefer whole grains to refined grains because they have more taste. It's an added benefit that whole grains also have more fiber, vitamins and minerals. The USDA food guide pyramid (www.mypyramid.gov) recommends that one-third of all grains eaten should be whole unprocessed and unrefined. Refined flours have been milled to make them white and fine textured. In this process the fiber rich bran and nutrient rich germ are removed; this removes all the fiber and iron and most of the B vitamins and minerals. Iron and some B vitamins are added back into enriched flour products. Not all the lost vitamins and minerals and none of the important micro-nutrients are replaced. Whole grains are whole wheat, brown rice, barley, whole corn meal, wild rice, cracked wheat, spelt, rye, oats, popcorn, amaranth, millet, quinoa, sorghum and triticale.



Whole grains are most often thought of as being course, dry, rough textured foods that don't taste very good. I've heard the words awful, icky, yucky, and horse food used to describe them. But they don't have to be any of those things. Whole grains are nutty, flavorful, tasty, delicious and yummy when prepared correctly. Here's the good news about whole grains, they are good for you; and the best news is they are loaded with complex carbohydrates, fiber, B vitamins, minerals and other micro-nutrients that are known to prevent cancers. Specifically, phyto-estrogens called lignans and other antioxidants in wheat bran appear to suppress cancer in the colon.

You can enjoy the health benefits of whole grains by adding them slowly to your diet. Choose whole grain breakfast cereals; serve whole grain crackers instead of fried chips, select whole grain pastas (they really do taste good), serve corn or whole wheat tortillas in place of white flour tortillas and substitute whole wheat flour for ¼ to ½ of white enriched flours when baking.

You will find cracked wheat/bulgur in the health food or bulk food section of your grocery store. It looks like wheat gravel – horse food, but don't let that fool you into not buying it. Some stores sell boxed Tabbouleh mixes that are usually on the shelf near rice mixes. If your store does not have cracked wheat/bulgur ask your grocer to order some for you.

This Tabbouleh recipe is made with cracked wheat and is a traditional Mediterranean recipe. You can add your personal touch to this by adding pitted Greek or black olives, diced red or green pepper or even finely minced onions. Tabbouleh is great served with pita bread (whole wheat of course), grilled lamb and a green salad.



Tabbouleh – Bulgur wheat salad

Makes 8 servings

1/2 cup cracked wheat/bulgur, cover with 1 cup of boiling water
1 cucumber peeled and chopped
1/4 cup fresh mint chopped – finely
1/2 cup fresh parsley chopped – finely
1 tomato chopped
Juice of 1 lemon
4 Tablespoons olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

Place cracked wheat in a heavy glass bowl. Pour boiling water over it until it is covered, about 1 cup. Place a tight lid or plastic wrap over bowl and let sit for 30 minutes
Next, mix all ingredients in order given

Serve on fresh lettuce leaves or as a side dish.

100 calories per serving, 7g fat, 1g saturated fat, no trans fats, no cholesterol, 20mg sodium, 3g dietary fiber, 1g sugars, 2 g proteins, 30% RDA Vitamin A, 25% Vitamin C, 6% Calcium and 30% Iron.

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