

Nutrition Bites



The Benefits of Whole Grains

Whole grains are proven to reduce the buildup of arterial plaque and reduce the risk of heart disease and high cholesterol. Whole grains are also important dietary sources of water-soluble, fat-soluble, and insoluble antioxidants, including vitamin E, tocotrienols, selenium, phenolic acids, and phytic acid. A type of phytonutrient especially abundant in whole grains are lignans, which protect against breast and other hormone-dependent cancers as well as heart disease.

Brown rice is the unrefined version of white rice, and, unlike white rice, still has the side hull and bran, which provide more nutrients such as proteins, thiamine (vitamin B1), vitamin B6, iron, calcium, magnesium, fiber, and potassium. Brown rice has a lower glycemic index than most refined grains, so it is less likely to cause insulin spikes.

Featured Grain

Brown Rice

- ✓ high fiber content
- ✓ prevents damage from free radicals (manganese)
- ✓ helps regulate thyroid hormone (selenium)
- ✓ lowers LDL cholesterol
- ✓ cardiovascular benefits to postmenopausal women
- ✓ anti-inflammatory (phytonutrients)
- ✓ promotes bone health (magnesium)
- ✓ helps prevent gallstones (insoluble fiber)

Sources:

Harvard School of Public Health

Mayo Clinic

World's Healthiest Foods



Soak your grains to help breakdown their antinutrients and hard-to-digest components, and at the same time, release highly beneficial nutrients. Follow these simple instructions:

- 1 cup of organic brown rice
- 1 tsp raw apple cider vinegar (or lemon juice)
- 2 cups warm filtered water
- 1/8 teaspoon of Celtic sea salt

Add above ingredients to a medium ceramic (or glass) mixing bowl and thoroughly combine. Cover the bowl and place it in a warm area of your kitchen overnight (8-12 hours). After soaking time is completed, drain mixture using a fine-mesh strainer and gently rinse. Cook with 1 3/4 cups water (or broth).

This Week's Recipe

Zucchini Brown Rice Gratin

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| 2 cups cooked brown rice | 3 large eggs, lightly beaten |
| 2 pounds zucchini, sliced crosswise 1/4 inch thick | 1 1/2 tsp chopped thyme |
| 6 1/2 Tbsp olive oil, divided | 3/4 cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, divided |
| 1 pound plum tomatoes, sliced crosswise 1/4 inch thick | 1/2 cup bread crumbs (optional) |
| 2 cups medium onion, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced | |
| 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped | |
- Makes 6 servings
Prep time: 20 min
Cook time: 45 min

- 1** Preheat oven to 450°F (and leave it on after step #2).
- 2** Toss the zucchini with 1 tablespoon oil and 1/2 teaspoon salt in a shallow baking pan. Toss tomatoes with 1/2 tablespoon oil and 1/4 teaspoon salt in another baking pan. Roast the zucchini in the upper third of oven and tomatoes in lower third, turning vegetables once halfway through, until tender and light golden, about 10 minutes for tomatoes; 20 minutes for zucchini.
- 3** Meanwhile, saute the onion and garlic with 1/2 teaspoon salt in 2 tablespoons oil in a large heavy skillet, covered, over low heat, stirring occasionally, until very tender, 15 to 20 minutes.
- 4** Stir together the onion mixture, cooked rice, eggs, thyme, 1/4 cup cheese, 1 tablespoon oil, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and 1/2 teaspoon pepper. Spread half of rice mixture in a baking dish, then top with half of zucchini. Spread remaining rice mixture over zucchini, then top with remaining zucchini. Lay the tomatoes over the top.
- 5** Mix the remaining cheese with the breadcrumbs and 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Sprinkle the cheese and breadcrumbs over the top.
- 6** Bake in upper third of oven until set and golden brown, about 20 minutes.