

# How to Cook Whole Grains

These are the most basic cooking instructions for a variety of whole grains. After trying this a time or two, you will need only the table “Cooking Chart for 1 Cup of Dry, Whole Grains” below as a cooking aide.



## Basic Method for Whole Grains

1. **Rinse** grains in a strainer under cold running water or by swishing in a bowl of water, then draining, and repeating one to two times until water is mostly clear.
2. **Transfer** grains to a large saucepan (for up to 2 cups of dry grain) or stock pot (for more than 2 cups of dry grain). If you would like to make pilaf instead of basic whole grains, do the following:
  - **Pilaf variation:** Omit the rinsing step or rinse but drain for a longer period of time until very dry. Then, any grain can be toasted in a dry pan, or with a bit of oil, over medium heat, stirring frequently, until it gives off a toasted aroma. After toasting, add the appropriate amount of liquid and follow the remaining cooking instructions.
3. **Add water and cook.** Add appropriate amount of water or other liquid as indicated on the Cooking Chart below, place covered over high heat, stirring occasionally until liquid comes to a boil. Add other seasonings or salt, if desired. Then stir once more, reduce heat to lowest setting, cover, and simmer for the length of time indicated on the Cooking Chart for 1 Cup of Dry Whole Grains.
  - **Other liquids:** Liquids can be wholly or partially substituted with broths, vegetable or fruit juices, teas, etc.—creativity and individual tastes are the limit. Be sure to decrease the salt (if using) when substituting salt-containing liquids for the water.
4. **Let stand.** Once cooking time is up, remove pot from heat without uncovering, and allow to stand for the standing time given in Cooking Chart, or longer.



Brown Rice



Quinoa



Pearled Barley



Millet



Wild Rice

► To see a demonstration of how to cook whole grains, follow the link at the bottom of this handout, navigate to Session 5: Healthy Bowls, and view the “How to Cook Whole Grains” video.

5. **Eat or store.** Your cooked, whole grain is ready to serve or store for later. To store, allow grains to cool to near room temperature. Then, store in a covered container in the refrigerator for up to 4 days (reheat in a covered dish in a microwave to serve) or freeze.



## TRY MAKING GRAIN “CUBES”

Grain cubes can be prepared for freezing by packing cooked grains into a 1-cup measuring cup, inverting onto a dinner plate or sheet pan (or whatever fits in the freezer) and repeating until all of the grains are portioned out. After freezing, remove the plate/pan, let sit for a few minutes so cubes can be easily removed, and transfer to a storage container for later use.



*Red Rice*



*Wheat Berries*



*Buckwheat*



*Rolled Oats/Old-fashioned Oatmeal*



*Whole Grain Oats/Unhulled Oats*

**Tip:** Frozen, individually portioned servings are great to take for lunch or to use for a busy weeknight dinner—simply microwave each portion in a covered container (or in a bowl with a plate over the top) for 1 to 1½ minutes on high, and voila, instant (and very inexpensive) whole grains. This also helps with portion control, and in a lunch bag, it doubles as the ice pack!

## Boiling Method for Whole Grains

An alternate method for whole grains that can keep their shape with cooking—such as rice, quinoa, wheat berries, farro, or barley—is to cook them like pasta. Bring a large pot of water to a boil, boil the grains until done (testing occasionally for taste/texture), then drain in a fine strainer and run cool water over the grains to stop the cooking. This method works well if you want to serve whole grains in a salad rather than as a warm side dish.

# Cooking Chart for 1 Cup\* of Dry, Whole Grains

\*1 cup is equal to 240 milliliters or about 0.25 liters by volume



| 1 Cup* Dry Whole Grain                                                                                         | Water                | Cooking Time (Unsoaked) | Soaked Overnight | Yield        | Standing Time        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| RICE (all gluten-free)                                                                                         |                      |                         |                  |              |                      |
| Brown rice (Long, medium or short grain; Basmati; Jasmine; Texmati; Sweet brown)                               | 1¾ cups              | 30 to 40 min            |                  | 3 cups       | 10 min               |
| Rice                                                                                                           | 1¾ cups              | 35 to 40 min            |                  | 3 cups       | 10 min               |
| Wild rice                                                                                                      | 2½ to 2¾ cups        | 50 to 55 min            |                  |              | 10 min               |
| Forbidden black rice                                                                                           | 1½ to 1¾ cups        | 30 min                  |                  | 3 cups       | 10 min               |
| OTHER GRAINS                                                                                                   |                      |                         |                  |              |                      |
| Quinoa (gluten-free)                                                                                           | 1¾ cups              | 12 to 15 min            |                  | 3½ cups      | (Fluff first) 10 min |
| Amaranth (gluten-free)                                                                                         | 2 to 2½ cups         | 20 to 25 min            |                  | 3 to 3½ cups | 10 min               |
| Teff (gluten-free)                                                                                             | 3½ to 3¾ cups        | 15 min                  |                  | 3 cups       | (Fluff first) 10 min |
| Millet (gluten-free)                                                                                           | 2¼ to 2½ cups        | 25 to 30 min            |                  | 4 cups       | (Fluff first) 10 min |
| Buckwheat, groats, roasted (gluten-free)                                                                       | 1¾ to 2 cups         | 20 min                  |                  | 3½ cups      | 10 min               |
| Barley, hulled                                                                                                 | 3 to 3½ cups         | 60 min                  |                  | 3½ to 4 cups | 10 min               |
| Barley, pearled                                                                                                | 3 to 3½ cups         | 60 min                  |                  | 3½ to 4 cups | 10 min               |
| Kamut                                                                                                          | 2½ to 3 cups         | 90 min                  | 30 to 45 min     | 2¾ cups      | 10 min               |
| Oat groats                                                                                                     | 1½ to 2 cups         | 1 hour                  | 35 min           | 2½ cups      | 10 min               |
| Rye, berries                                                                                                   | 3 to 3½ cups         | 1 1/2 hours             |                  | 3 cups       | 10 min               |
| Spelt                                                                                                          | 2½ to 3 cups         | 1 1/2 to 2 hours        | 45 min           | 2½ cups      | 10 min               |
| Wheat berries, hard (red)                                                                                      | 2½ to 3 cups         | 1 1/2 to 2 hours        |                  | 3 cups       | 10 min               |
| Wheat berries, soft (white)                                                                                    | 2½ to 3 cups         | 1 hour                  |                  | 3 cups       | 10 min               |
| Bulgur (alternate: steep—see below)                                                                            | 1¾ cups              | 10 min                  |                  | 3 cups       | 10 min               |
| Wheat, cracked                                                                                                 | 2¾ cups              | 20 min                  |                  | 3 cups       | 10 min               |
| GRAINS THAT CAN STEEP (Don't rinse—just stir in boiling water, cover, and rest for time given for “standing.”) |                      |                         |                  |              |                      |
| Couscous, whole wheat                                                                                          | 1¼ to 1½ cups        | 1 min                   |                  | 2½ cups      | 10 min               |
| Bulgur                                                                                                         | 2 cups boiling water |                         |                  | 3 cups       | 1 hour               |