

Gluten-Free Grains: A Guide

Removing gluten from the diet can be a daunting task, but it doesn't mean removing grains entirely. Fortunately there are a lot of healthy alternatives that are easy to prepare, versatile, and full of nutrients — not to mention great taste. Most of us are familiar with corn, oats, and rice, so step out of your comfort zone with the choices below. When purchasing gluten-free foods, it's important to read labels to ensure that the product isn't processed in a plant that also processes gluten-containing foods. Oats are notorious for cross-contamination, so be extra careful there. Once you've identified reliable sources for these grains, the sky's the limit!

Amaranth ~ Technically a seed, amaranth is rich in protein, fiber, iron, and magnesium, and has been shown to reduce LDL cholesterol levels and inflammation. It makes a great substitute for couscous, and (when cooked and chilled) can be used as a thickening agent for sauces and soups.



Buckwheat ~ Contrary to what its name suggests, buckwheat is not wheat at all. It's a healthy grain-like seed that's rich in antioxidants like quercetin, and works in both sweet and savory applications. Soba noodles are made from buckwheat and are a great pasta alternative. Buckwheat also works well in soups and salads.

Millet ~ This cereal grain is rich in protein, fiber, and antioxidants. It can be prepared as a hot cereal, as well as used in grain bowls, pilafs, salads, and for baking.



Sorghum ~ Another cereal grain, sorghum is rich in antioxidants and blood sugar-balancing fiber. It's a great substitute for barley in soups and stews, and can be ground into a flour for baking.



Quinoa ~ What sets quinoa apart from other grains and seeds is that it's a complete protein. Great as a side dish or in a salad or grain bowl, quinoa comes in a variety of colors, so try them all!



Teff ~ This tiny grain is high in protein, fiber, and B vitamins. It's great as a hot cereal, a thickener, or a flour sub in baking.

Tips & Tricks

- ▶ Most grains benefit from soaking or rinsing before cooking to tame bitterness, improve digestibility, and/or reduce phytic acid, which can inhibit nutrient absorption.
- ▶ When looking for wheat substitutes for baking, don't forget nuts and fruit. Almond flour, coconut flour, and even banana flour (made from green bananas) are ideal for baking muffins and more.