

Power Your Plate with Grain Foods

Grain Foods and Nutrition

Grain foods provide dietary fiber as well as essential vitamins including folate, thiamin, niacin, vitamin B6, riboflavin, and vitamin A; as well as minerals such as iron, zinc, manganese, copper, magnesium, phosphorus and selenium. Enriched grains are the largest contributor of folic acid in the American diet. Additionally, almost 40% of the dietary fiber in the American diet comes from refined grain foods. Whole grain foods provide about 10% intake of dietary fiber.

What are grain foods?

Delicious foods such as bread, rolls, buns, bagels, naan, pitas, other flatbreads, and English muffins can be made with either **whole grains or enriched grains**. Whole grain foods contain all the essential parts and naturally occurring nutrients of the entire grain seed in their original proportions. This definition means that 100% of the original kernel—all of the bran, germ, and endosperm—must be present to qualify as a whole grain.¹ Enriched grains are fortified with vitamins and minerals that are reduced during the milling process. In fact, some B vitamins are added back at higher amounts to address nutrient shortfalls in the U.S. Many baked products and other grain-based foods use a mixture of both whole and enriched grains and pack a powerful nutrition punch!

Versatility

With so many varieties of whole and enriched grain foods, there are countless ways to include them in meals and snacks throughout the day. Grain foods can be an integral part of the meal such as a bun or bread for a burger or a sandwich. Naan, flatbread and pita, historically regarded as unique to certain cultures, are now becoming staples in the American diet. And English muffins, well, they're not just for breakfast anymore! Breads made from rye, wheat, oat and other grains, multi-grain, light, sliced, or whole loaf, grain foods offer tastes and textures to satisfy any palate.





Grain Foods Meet USDA's Challenge to *Make Every Bite Count*!

Make Every Bite Count starts with a well-rounded plate. Eating a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives is key, but taste is also important. Nutritious and delicious combinations of pulses, pork, sorghum and other grain foods bring nutrients, texture, and flavors together to create *Powerful Pairings* that bring taste and balance to the plate to fuel the body and mind.

As plant-based foods, delicious whole and enriched grain foods are staples in today's diet. They are perfect vehicles for so much nutrition and play a foundational role within all the DGA recommended diet patterns. They are the essential foundation for a delicious pork BBQ sandwich, the ideal conduit for hummus, and the ultimate companion a sorghum-based Mediterranean bowl. Grain foods are as delicious as they are nutritious, and the variety of options make them easy choices to *Make Every Bite Count*!



Powerful Pairings that include pork, pulses, sorghum and grain foods dial up so much great taste, nutrition, and versatility that they make it easier to achieve more family meals.

Powerful Pairings, when consumed as part of family meals, will have a positive impact on overall health and well-being.

Research shows that family meals improve family cohesion, communication, and relationships, helping us prepare for uncertainty, manage difficult life moments, and celebrate simple joys together. It is not just eating together, but also preparing meals as a family favorably impacts health.^{2,3,4,5,6} Research also shows that people who frequently cook meals at home eat healthier and consume fewer calories.⁷ Discover *Powerful Pairings* when you're preparing and sharing your next family meal; sample a new variety of [pulses](#), replace an ordinary side dish with [sorghum](#), introduce a new cut of [pork](#), incorporate a delicious [grain food](#) and enjoy!

1. <https://wholegrainscouncil.org/definition-whole-grain>
2. Horning ML, Fulkerson JA, Friend SE, Neumark-Sztainer D. Associations among Nine Family Dinner Frequency Measures and Child Weight, Dietary, and Psychosocial Outcomes. *J Acad Nutr Diet*. 2016;116(6):991-999.
3. Utter J, Denny S, Peiris-John R, Moselen E, Dyson B, Clark T. Family Meals and Adolescent Emotional Well-Being: Findings From a National Study. *J Nutr Educ Behav*. 2017;49(1):67-72 e61.
4. Leeman J, Crandell JL, Lee A, Bai J, Sandelowski M, Knafl K. Family Functioning and the Well-Being of Children With Chronic Conditions: A Meta-Analysis. *Res Nurs Health*. 2016;39(4):229-243.
5. Moens E, Braet C, Soetens B. Observation of family functioning at mealtime: a comparison between families of children with and without overweight. *J Pediatr Psychol*. 2007;32(1):52-63.
6. Patton SR, Piazza-Waggoner C, Modi AC, Dolan LM, Powers SW. Family functioning at meals relates to adherence in young children with type 1 diabetes. *J Paediatr Child Health*. 2009;45(12):736-741.
7. Wolfson JA, Bleich SN. Is cooking at home associated with better diet quality or weight-loss intention? *Public Health Nutr*. 2015 Jun;18(8):1397-406. doi: 10.1017/S1368890014001943. Epub 2014 Nov 17. PMID: 25399031.

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