



FARRO, CHERRY, AND WALNUT SALAD

Habit Fix The Whole Grain Edition

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What's up, Staff of Life?

Grains can be a wonderful, wholesome, nutrient-rich part of anyone's diet. They provide fiber, B vitamins, and numerous minerals. We eat them in endless forms: bread, crackers, cereals, and chips, pastas, cookies, crusts, and bowls. The high carbohydrate content provides quick-burning fuel for our muscles and brain, while the fiber in whole grains slows absorption to help maintain proper blood sugar.

The Other Shoe

Grains don't actually want to be digested. They'd much prefer to be swallowed whole and sent out the other end in a conveniently fertilized pile. For that reason, they contain many digestion inhibitors and anti-nutrients that not only prevent us from absorbing the good stuff, but can also leach minerals from our bodies on their way through. Furthermore, most processed grain foods have been grown in nutrient-poor soils, treated heavily with pesticides and herbicides, and are refined after harvesting, stripping them

of whatever nutrients that are left. A variety of additives and preservatives are then incorporated back in, furthering their depleting qualities.

What to Do?

There are a few very simple steps you can take to make the grains in your diet nourishing and healthy. Soaking, sprouting, and fermenting are traditional methods of preparing grains that increase the nutrient availability and decrease the bad stuff. These methods also increase enzymes which help to digest the parts that give us a hard time. With a little foresight and a few minutes of prep, you can easily incorporate these habits into your kitchen time.



That Sounds Like Work

If you don't have the time or ambition or partner-support to immediately replace all store-bought breads and cereals with bowls of slow-cooked kamut berries and fermented injera bread, that's ok. There are products on the market that are made with these healthier methods for when you need to save time.



Is It Worth It?

To be clear, chances are the processed grains in your life are not going to kill you. But the unfortunate truth is that they're doing little good for your body, despite the various minerals and vitamins that are added back in during the process.

While purchasing high-quality, whole grains in bulk is relatively cheap, buying organic, sprouted grain products, such as chips and bread, is less so. However, it's important to consider the price-per-nutrient value. When you buy nutrient-poor foods, such as conventional pasta, you pay a little money for very little nutrition and you end up hungrier sooner, because your cells haven't received the nutrients they need.



Replacements

INSTEAD OF CONVENTIONAL BREAD

Half-Step:

- Look for sprouted breads at the grocery store or traditional sourdough loaves from a local bakery.

Advanced:

- Try some homemade sourdough loaves with old grain varieties such as spelt, rye, teff, kamut, or buckwheat. Look for "no-knead" recipes for the easiest options.
- Replace bread with soaked and cooked grain bowls, topping as desired with vegetables, eggs, and sauce.

INSTEAD OF CONVENTIONAL CHIPS

Half-Step:

- Look for sprouted chips at the grocery store or brands that are fried in coconut oil, such as Jackson's Honest. Buy organic corn chips to avoid GMO products.

Advanced:

- Replace chips with thinly sliced vegetables such as cucumbers, beets, sweet potatoes, radishes, and carrots.

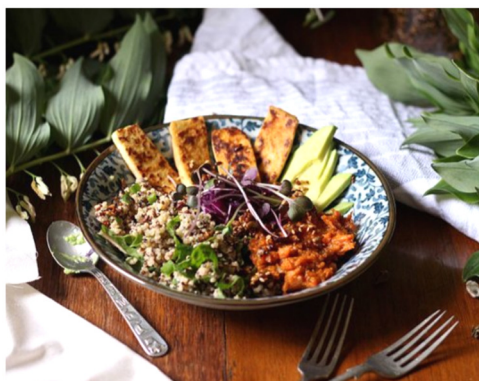
INSTEAD OF CONVENTIONAL WRAPS

Half-Step:

- Look for sprouted wraps or coconut wraps at the grocery store.

Advanced:

- Try making sourdough wraps at home.
- Use collard green leaves, lightly steamed cabbage leaves, or other greens to roll up your lunch.



Bowls

Top any cooked grains with nuts, berries, and yogurt for a hearty breakfast or protein, vegetables, and dressing for an easy lunch or dinner.



Leafy Wraps

Leaves make a surprisingly strong and satisfying wrap alternative, surprisingly mild in flavor (especially when lightly steamed) and full of vitamins, minerals, and all sorts of other healthy tidbits.

Tips

SOAK IT IN

Grab a bowl.

Pour in 1-4 cups of grains.

Cover by a few inches of water.

Strain and rinse after 24 hours.

Add more water for another day of soaking if you don't feel like cooking them right away OR...

Put grains in a stove pot, cover with water, bring to a boil then quickly reduce to a simmer until done.

Alternately, put soaked grains into the slow cooker on low for 6-8 hours.

Store leftovers in fridge for up to a week.

WRAP IT UP

Rinse your dark leafy greens.

If desired, steam over boiling water for 2-4 minutes.

Let cool and get your wrap on.

SPROUT IT

Soak grains in water for 24 hours.

Rinse, drain, and cover with cheesecloth or a paper towel in a bowl or wide-mouth mason jar.

Repeat 1-2 times a day until small sprouts are showing.

Cook, dehydrate, or food-process into a paste for making bread products.

Resources:

- <http://nourishedkitchen.com/how-to-make-a-sourdough-starter/>
- <http://nourishedkitchen.com/whole-grain-no-knead-sourdough/>
- <http://thenourishinghome.com/2012/03/how-to-soak-grains-for-optimal-nutrition/>
- <http://www.thekitchn.com/how-to-make-sprouted-grains-cooking-lessons-from-the-kitchn-204466>
- <http://www.bonappetit.com/recipes/slideshow/grain-bowl>

