

Ancient Grains

What are ancient grains?

Ancient grains are a grouping of grains and pseudo cereals that are considered to have been minimally changed by selective breeding over recent millennia, as opposed to more widespread cereals such as corn, rice and modern varieties of wheat, which are the product of thousands of years of selective breeding.



Ancient grains include:

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| Spelt | Oats |
| Khorasan wheat (Kamut) | Freekeh |
| Millet | Bulgur |
| Barley | Sorghum |
| Teff | Farro |

They also include pseudo cereals such as quinoa, amaranth, buckwheat, and chia.

When it comes to nutrition, ancient grains are powerhouses. They are rich in lots of essential vitamins, particularly B vitamins, minerals like magnesium, potassium, and zinc as well as good amounts of iron. Ancient grains also contain protective elements like fiber, antioxidants, protein, and omega fatty acids.

Some but not all ancient grains are gluten free including quinoa, amaranth, millet, teff, and buckwheat. Farro, spelt and Kamut are not gluten-free, but some people with gluten or wheat sensitivities (not celiac disease) can tolerate them.

A serving of Farro (aka emmer wheat), for example, is high in protein (7 grams), fiber (7 grams), and iron (12%), plus it's an easily digested strain of wheat. 10,000 years ago, Farro was cultivated in the Fertile Crescent at the dawn of the agricultural revolution where it spread to Asia, Europe, Northeast Africa, India and Arabic peninsula.

Farro has a delicious nutty flavor and can be used in a wide variety of recipes that call for other grains such as quinoa and brown rice. You will find some great recipes below. But you might also look at your own recipes for foods that incorporate other whole grains and make a simple substitution.

One Pot Healthy Jambalaya

Ingredients:

1 Tablespoon extra-virgin Olive Oil, plus 2 Tablespoons
1 small Onion, Chopped
5 stalks Celery, Chopped
1 cup Green Bell Pepper, Large, chopped
1 cup Farro
2 Bay Leaf
1 1/2 Tablespoons Garlic Powder
1 Tablespoon Smoked Paprika
2 teaspoons Chili Powder
13 ounces Strained Tomatoes, or tomato puree
3 cups Organic Vegetable Broth
1 15 oz., can Cannellini Beans, thoroughly drained and rinsed
30 Wild Caught Frozen Uncooked Shrimps, Peeled and deveined
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Directions:

1. Heat 1 Tablespoon olive oil in a large, deep sauté pan over medium heat.
2. Add the onion and cook until softened, about 2 minutes.
3. Add 2 Tablespoons olive oil, celery, bell pepper, farro, bay leaves, garlic powder, paprika, chili powder, and strained tomatoes. Stir until well combined. season with salt and pepper.
4. Add the vegetable broth, stir until combined, and bring to a boil.
5. When broth begins to boil, reduce to a light simmer, cover, and cook, stirring frequently.
6. When most of the broth is reduced down and vegetables and farro are nearly tender, after about 15-17 minutes, add the white beans and shrimp.
7. Stir until well combined, and season with salt and pepper. When the shrimp are cooked through, after about 5 minutes, serve.

Summer Farro Salad with Tomato, Cucumber & Basil

Serves 4 to 6

Ingredients:

Olive oil, for cooking
2 large shallots (or 1 sweet onion), finely chopped
2 cups farro (uncooked)
4 cups chicken or vegetable stock
1/4 cup red wine vinegar
2 Tablespoons olive oil
1 pint cherry or grape tomatoes, halved or quartered
1/2 large English (hothouse) cucumber, diced
1/4 cup finely chopped basil
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Directions:

1. Heat a few tablespoons olive oil in a heavy saucepan over medium heat. Add the shallots and sauté until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the farro and cook, stirring to coat each grain, 1 to 2 minutes.
2. Pour in the stock and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer, cover, and cook until farro is soft but still chewy in the center, about 12 minutes. (If there is more than a tablespoon or two of leftover stock, strain it out.)
3. Cool the farro to room temperature. Add the red wine vinegar and olive oil, and stir to combine. Fold in tomatoes, cucumbers, and basil. Season with salt and pepper, and adjust vinegar and oil amounts to taste. Serve chilled or at room temperature.

Farro Salad with Peas, Asparagus and Feta

Ingredients:

1-1/2 cups farro
12 ounces asparagus, trimmed, cut into 1 1/2-inch lengths
1 8-ounce package sugar snap peas
12 ounces grape tomatoes, halved
1/2 cup thinly sliced and chopped red onion
6 Tablespoons chopped fresh dill
1/2 cup olive oil
1/4 cup Sherry wine vinegar

1 7-ounce package feta cheese, crumbled

Directions:

Cook farro in large saucepan of boiling salted water until just tender, about 25 to 30 minutes. Drain. Transfer to large bowl.

Meanwhile, steam asparagus and sugar snap peas in another saucepan until crisp-tender, about 3 to 5 minutes. Drain. Add to farro with tomatoes, onion, and dill. Whisk oil and vinegar in small bowl. Season dressing with salt and pepper. Add dressing and feta to salad; toss to coat and serve.