

WHOLE GRAIN PITA PIZZA

Makes 2 servings

2 round 6-7" whole wheat pitas

6 oz spaghetti sauce (about ¼ of a typical jar)

3 oz part-skim shredded mozzarella cheese

1 cup chopped vegetables (onions, peppers, mushrooms, spinach, olives—your choice)

Drizzle of olive oil

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spread half the sauce on each pita round. If you're using chopped fresh spinach, add it now, before the cheese, so it won't dry out too much.
2. Top with cheese, divided between the two pizzas, and then vegetables. Drizzle with oil.
3. Bake for 15 minutes on a pizza pan or cookie sheet.

Much healthier than store or restaurant pizza because you have a whole-grain crust, plenty of vegetables and a reasonable amount of cheese. Add small bits of Italian chicken or turkey sausage if you like. Kids love to decorate their own pizzas!

IRISH OATMEAL WITH APPLES

Makes 4 servings

1 cup steel-cut oatmeal

4 cups water (we use slightly less)

4 small apples or pears, washed, cored and chopped (no need to peel them)

Dash of cinnamon and/or nutmeg

1 handful walnuts or pecans (optional)

Enough milk (soy milk and cow's milk are both good)

1. Measure oats into saucepan and add water. In general you want about ¼ cup oats and one cup water per person. Use less water next time if you like drier oatmeal.
2. Bring to a boil, then simmer "actively"—keep temperature where the oatmeal will bubble a lot but won't start rising up the pan. Keep pan uncovered and stir every 5 minutes or so.
3. Meanwhile, core and chop apples, into four microwave-proof cereal bowls. Add a little cinnamon and nutmeg to taste, then microwave uncovered bowls on high for 4 minutes.
4. When the oatmeal has thickened as much as you like (takes about 15-20 minutes), spoon it into the four cereal bowls, right on top of the apples.
5. Sprinkle with nuts; add milk as you eat it, to keep the thickness just the way you want.

Get a head start on your morning oats by combining steel-cut oats and water and bringing them to a boil the night before, as you clean up from dinner. Put a lid on the pan, turn off the heat, then put the cooled pan in the fridge overnight. In the morning, oats will finish cooking in just five minutes.

Steel-cut oats have a different texture than regular oatmeal; try them for variety. Regular oats make a wonderful healthy meal too—and they cook faster. Try different fruits: peaches, raw blueberries.

QUINOA CORN SALAD

Makes 4 servings

Dressing:

- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (juice of one small lemon)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh cilantro or parsley, chopped
- 2 stalks scallions, chopped
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon cumin

Salad:

- ¼ cup quinoa (rinsed under water) or bulgur
- ½ cup chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 tomato, seeded and diced
- 1 cup fresh or frozen corn (use three ears if fresh corn)

1. Cook quinoa or bulgur in broth for 12 to 15 minutes, until liquid is absorbed.
2. While grain cooks, mix dressing ingredients in a large bowl.
3. Add drained and rinsed beans, tomato and corn.
4. Cool grain to room temperature, then mix with other ingredients; chill until ready to eat.

This salad is best in the summer, with fresh tomato and corn. If you use quinoa, rinse it first in a strainer to remove any traces of saponin, a bitter coating found naturally on quinoa.

BULGUR & BLACK BEAN SALAD

Makes 4 servings

- 1 cup uncooked bulgur
- 1 orange (or lemon), grated zest and juice (grate zest first, THEN juice it!)
- 2 teaspoons vinegar
- 2 tablespoons canola or olive oil
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped into small pieces
- 6 stalks green onions, chopped into small pieces (green & white parts)
- 4 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 14-15 oz can black beans, drained and rinsed thoroughly

1. Put 1 cup bulgur and 2 cups water in covered sauce pan. Bring to boil then simmer 12 to 15 minutes until excess liquid is absorbed.
2. Scrub orange, then remove zest (a cheese grater works well). Cut orange in half and squeeze juice into a large mixing bowl.
3. Add orange zest, vinegar, oil and cumin to the orange juice in the bowl.
4. Chop all the vegetables while the bulgur is cooking.
5. Throw vegetables and rinsed beans in the bowl and mix. Add cooked bulgur and mix again.

Use cooked bulgur or brown rice, leftover from last night's dinner. Or use whole-wheat couscous. Add any vegetables you want. Use a lemon instead of an orange. It's up to you.



MUSHROOM BROWN RICE PILAF

Makes 4 generous servings or 6 smaller servings

- 1 tablespoon olive or canola oil
- ½ large onion, chopped
- 1 cup sliced mushrooms (4–5 mushrooms)
- 1 cup brown rice
- 2 cups chicken or vegetable broth

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan and brown onion and mushrooms for about five minutes.
2. Add brown rice and stir to coat grains in oil.
3. Add broth, bring to a boil, then turn down to a simmer.
4. Simmer for about 45 minutes or until all liquid is absorbed. Cooking time for whole grain rice varies according to the variety of rice; check package directions.

Whole grain rice isn't always brown! Check out some of the exotic varieties like Forbidden (Black) Rice or Bhutanese Red Rice, which make great gourmet side dishes.

You can make a pilaf like this with any grain—not just rice. Simply vary the amount of broth and the cooking time according to the different grain. In a hurry? Try bulgur or quinoa, which both cook in under 15 minutes.

ITALIAN SAUSAGE SANDWICH

Makes 4 servings

- 4 links pre-cooked chicken or turkey Italian sausage
- 2 red or green sweet peppers, sliced thinly
- 1 large onion, sliced thinly
- 2 large rounds of whole-wheat pita bread, cut in half to make pockets

1. Cut the sausages in half the long way, and brown flat side down in a little olive or canola oil.
2. Saute the pepper and onion slices in a little oil until limp (you decide—some like 'em crunchy)
3. Stuff one-quarter of the veggies, and 2 sausage halves into each pita pocket.

Italian sausage can be healthy? Who knew! Good chicken or turkey sausage has all the taste of fatty pork sausage but without the extra unhealthy fats. Some big plusses:

- *It has great flavor. Look for varieties like Italian, teriyaki ginger, roasted garlic, tomato-and-basil, and spicy jalapeño.*
- *It has about ½ the calories, ⅓ the total fat and and ⅓ the saturated fat.*
- *It's pre-cooked and quick. Use as is, or brown lightly for additional flavor and eye-appeal.*
- *You can chop leftover sausage in small bits and freeze. A little of it adds great meat flavor to omelettes, soups and salads.*

Add plenty of vegetables and serve with whole wheat pita or buns, and this is a VERY healthy meal.

You can substitute whole wheat sandwich rolls for the pita, but good whole wheat pita is usually easier to find and all the veggies stay in the sandwich better.

SHRIMP PASTA PRIMAVERA

Makes 4 servings

- 8 oz whole wheat spiral pasta
- ½ lb frozen pre-cooked shrimp
- 2 cups mixed chopped veggies—your choice (good choices include red peppers, zucchini, onion, mushrooms, broccoli, garlic)
- 1 cup cleaned chopped spinach
- 1 jar unsweetened spaghetti sauce (your choice of flavor)
- Freshly grated parmesan cheese (optional)

1. Fill a large sauce pan with water and bring to boil. Add pasta and cook according to package.
2. Thaw shrimp in cool water, and pinch off their tails.
3. Chop the veggies and saute in a little olive oil until tender-crisp.
4. Add the spinach, spaghetti sauce, and shrimp to the veggies and warm until spinach wilts.
5. Drain pasta and combine with sauce/veggie/shrimp mix. Top with cheese, if desired.

Vary the vegetables—substitute leftover chicken or beans or good chicken sausage for the shrimp. There are endless ways you can re-invent this dish, but they can all be made in about ten minutes.

Whole grain pastas vary in texture and taste. Try a few different brands to find the one your family enjoys best.

SPINACH PASTA SALAD

Makes 4 servings

- 6 oz uncooked whole wheat, whole rice, or quinoa/corn pasta
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice (Just juice half a lemon. Close enough.)
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic (2 cloves)
- 4 cups fresh spinach leaves, cleaned and chopped
- 1 can chickpeas or other white beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 oz feta cheese

1. Bring a large saucepan of water to a boil, and cook pasta according to package directions. (Spiral whole-wheat pasta is good, and takes about 8 minutes to cook.)
2. In a large salad bowl, mix the lemon juice, oil and garlic. Minced garlic in a jar is handy!
3. While the pasta boils, clean and chop spinach, drain and rinse beans.
4. Drain pasta and mix with dressing in the salad bowl. Add spinach, beans and feta and mix.
5. Chill for one hour or more, or simply enjoy it warm, with salt and pepper to taste.

Whole grain pasta comes in lots more varieties besides just whole wheat. Check out area markets for rice pasta or pasta made with a mix of quinoa and corn. Try them all!



CURRIED BARLEY & RAISINS

Makes 4 servings

½ cup whole grain barley

2 cups broth or water

2 teaspoons olive oil

1 large onion (about 2 cups), in thin slices

1 teaspoon minced garlic

1 teaspoon curry powder

2 tablespoon raisins*

2 tablespoon fresh parsley, chopped*

2 tablespoon slivered almonds, toasted*

**These 3 amounts are approximate. You decide!*

1. Cook the barley in the broth or water for about 45 minutes, until liquid is absorbed.
2. While the barley cooks, saute the onion in the oil in a very large skillet for about 15 minutes, until golden brown, stirring occasionally.
3. Add garlic and curry powder, mix, and cook one more minute to blend spices.
4. When barley is done, add it to the skillet and mix thoroughly so barley gets coated with delicious spices and oil.
5. Turn off heat and add raisins, parsley, and almonds. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Barley's not just for soups! You can add shrimp, chicken, or other lean protein to this recipe; as a one-dish entrée served with a salad, it makes a healthy complete meal.

CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

Makes 4 dozen cookies

1½ sticks butter

¾ cup sugar

½ cup brown sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla

2 large eggs

1 teaspoon baking soda

1½ cups whole wheat flour

¼ cup unbleached all-purpose flour

¼ cup wheat bran

¼ cup flax meal

1½ cups semi-sweet chocolate chips

1½ cups walnuts, chopped

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. With an electric mixer, cream together butter and sugars, then add vanilla and eggs.
3. In a separate bowl, combine the soda, flours, bran and flax meal. You can use 2¼ cups whole wheat flour in place of the mix of flours, bran and flax meal.
4. Gradually add flour mixture to mixing bowl; mix well.
5. Add chocolate chips and nuts, and mix well.
6. Drop by rounded spoonfuls on a cookie sheet and bake for 8 to 10 minutes.

These cookies are a delicious make-over of the recipe traditionally found on packages of chocolate chips.

APPLE BLUEBERRY CRISP

Makes 8 servings

4 apples (McIntosh and Cortland are good for cooking)

2 cups blueberries

½ cup whole wheat flour

1 cup regular rolled oats

1 teaspoon cinnamon

½ cup brown sugar

4 tablespoon canola oil

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray an 9 x 13-inch pan with cooking spray or rub with butter.
2. Wash, core and chop apples. No need to peel them. Put in cooking dish with blueberries.
3. In another small bowl, mix flour, oats, cinnamon, sugar and oil until crumbly. Spread evenly over fruit.
4. Bake for about 40 minutes or until bubbly.
5. Serve as is, or with a dollop of whipped cream or vanilla ice cream.

You can use any fruit you want. Just make sure it totals about 5 cups of fruit. Crisp tastes better the next day.

SWEDISH APPLE PIE

Makes 6-8 servings

1 large or extra-large egg

½ cup sugar

½ cup whole wheat flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

½ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon cinnamon

¼ teaspoon vanilla

3 medium-size apples, cored & chopped, but not peeled

1 cup chopped nuts (walnuts or pecans are good)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a 10-inch pie pan with cooking spray.
2. In a large bowl, beat egg thoroughly with a fork, until it forms a ribbon.
3. Add everything else EXCEPT apples and nuts, and mix thoroughly.
4. Add apples and nuts, and mix as well as you can. You'll wonder if you've done something wrong, as it's a very lumpy mix—not even qualifying for the word “batter.” But keep going, and mix the best you can. Soon it will all hang together somewhat.
5. Spoon it all into the pie plate and bake for 30 minutes or until lightly brown.

Tips:

- *McIntosh, Cortland, and other pie apples are best. Eating apples (Fuji, Delicious, etc.) may result in a drier pie (but go ahead and try them if that's what you have on hand).*
- *Mix pears and apples if you'd like.*
- *Serve plain and warm, or with a dollop of vanilla frozen yogurt or with plain yogurt mixed with a little maple syrup.*

SO much quicker than traditional apple pie—no crust to make or apples to peel!