

HOW AND WHY TO TAKE PART IN WHOLE GRAIN SAMPLING DAY 2021



Today, most people only need to try a new whole grain to realize they like it. This means that the best way to increase whole grain consumption is to find ways to help everyone try more whole grains.

That's why Oldways and the Whole Grains Council invented Whole Grain Sampling Day. Held every year on the last Wednesday in March, Whole Grain Sampling Day is a creative, open-ended celebration unfolding in different ways in thousands of locations at the same time. Our goal is to have people everywhere saying, "That was great! Where have whole grains been all my life?"

We invite you to join us on **Wednesday, March 31, 2021** for the next Whole Grain Sampling Day. The benefits to your customers are obvious: they'll learn how delicious and nutritious can team up with whole grains, and they'll reap the many health benefits of whole grain foods. But what are the benefits to you as a business?



Four Great Benefits for Restaurants, Food Service, and Food Trucks

- 1. Increase Sales.** Whole Grain Sampling Day can drive traffic to your business. But you have to help us help you out, by planning a whole grain promotion.
- 2. Positive Press.** Not everyone can combine delicious with nutritious. Show the world you have what it takes to meet the challenge with tasty whole grain options.
- 3. Attract Families.** According to a recent survey, moms are more likely to bring the family to a restaurant serving whole grains. 20% said they'd even pay extra!
- 4. Erase the Veto Power.** When you make it clear you have something for all different tastes, you'll attract groups of friends.

Participation is Easy

There are no fees and almost no rules—virtually anything goes, as long as it celebrates whole grains. We'll brainstorm with you, provide you with support materials, and help you get local and national publicity for your creative promotion of whole grains.

Read on for ideas and next steps. And don't miss our highlights of previous years' Whole Grain Sampling Day events on the last page.

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Ideas for Restaurants and Food Service

Need ideas for how to participate? Whole Grain Sampling Day is not a one-size-fits-all operation, so there are great ways for kitchens of all sizes to take part. We are happy to help you at any point in the process, and here are some ideas to get you started:

- **Highlight Existing Whole Grain Menu Items**
There's no need to create new menu items – unless of course you want to. If you've already got delicious dishes on your menu, feature those!
- **Use Current Whole Grain Favorites to Sell Something Else**
If you have an item that sells well, use it to help you promote something new. (i.e., "If you like our Wild Rice Medley, try our NEW Quinoa Salad!")
- **Go for BOGO!**
Offer a free dessert or beverage when a guest purchases a dish with whole grains. Even better if the dessert is whole grain—ask us for ideas!
- **Put on a Show**
If you have the time and space, have a chef conduct a cooking demonstration with a "new menu item." You can even provide the recipe as a take-home.
- **Meet and Greet**
If you source any whole grains locally, ask your provider to come in and distribute flyers, samples, or coupons. Everyone wants to meet the baker who provides your delicious breads or the pasta-maker behind that fabulous whole grain fettuccine.
- **Make the Better Choice the First Choice**
Institute whole grains as "the norm" on your menus, and let customers ask for refined options. Whole Grain Sampling Day is a great time to start.
- **Be Aware of Your Surroundings**
Are you a corporate cafeteria, or a restaurant in an office park? Find out if there are clubs in your building that meet on-site. Invite the book club or the walking club to schedule their weekly get-together at your place on Whole Grain Sampling Day.

Idea for Food Trucks

In [2012](#) and [2013](#), the Whole Grains Council criss-crossed Boston in an amphibious Duck Boat passing out whole grain samples on Whole Grain Sampling Day. Later, as we brainstormed ideas, we said to ourselves, "Gee, too bad there isn't some way to have mobile vans in every city..." And then the vision came to us—get the ever-creative food trucks on board!

- **Highlight Items You Already Sell**
We're not asking you to reinvent the wheel. Already using brown rice, buckwheat noodles or crepes, or whole grain breads, wraps or tortillas? Awesome. Let's promote that!
- **Find Alternatives for Regular Menu Items**
Not sure where to start? Look at your standard menu and find easy swaps for refined grains. We can help!
- **Thinking of Trying Something New?**
Today's the day! Whole grain consumption is up and people everywhere are looking for healthier options. Show them you can do that, while keeping the flavors they already know you for. For this one day, "bench" a slower-selling menu item and hand out samples of your potential new whole grain item with every dish.
- **Give Your Customers Options**
We know what you're thinking... *I don't have room for anything else!* It's ok—adding whole grains doesn't require more space, just differentiated space. With no fear of crossover or contamination, it's just as easy to have both, and you can broaden your reach. If you already carry 2 cambros of rice, make one brown—it's all about offering a selection.
- **Stuff Your Staff**
People rely on order-takers for guidance. Make sure if a customer asks "how is that whole wheat wrap?" that they can confidently talk it up. Serving your staff everything inside the window means it gets in more hands outside the window. No opinion = no sale.

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How to Commit and Promote: Just Do It!

But seriously—all we ask is that you tell us you're in, and we'll help you do the rest. (No contract to sign, no fee to pay.)

In addition to listing you on our site as a participant in our festivities, we'll be broadcasting to our newsletter subscribers and enlisting the help of popular bloggers and other consumer press to get the word out about all our Sampling Day partners' diverse activities.

At the same time, we encourage you to promote your participation too, in ways that only you can do:

Promotion Tips for Restaurants and Food Service

- Use existing sign stands, restroom ad space, and flyers in your check holders. Start early so your regulars know when to come back. If you print a daily menu, draw special attention to whole grains there; use our [Whole Grain Sampling Day Logos](#).
- We'll also add you to our list of restaurants currently serving whole grains. If you are already partnered with Healthy Dining Finder, they will also be promoting your participation. (If not, maybe you should be!)
- Talk up your plans on your website, Facebook page, and Twitter. For ideas, [take a look here](#) and start thinking about ways to make this year's event even better. You know your customers – take this opportunity to introduce them to something new.

Promotion Tips for Food Trucks

- If you are part of a local truck collaborative, ask to have WGSD added to your website and try to encourage other members to participate. Remember—it's free! We'll be working with truck locators to help them help you. If you know of one we don't—pass the information along.
- Get the message out. Start posting early on your Facebook pages to build some momentum and as the day gets closer, include your WGSD menu item/participation in your daily location tweets.
- Be creative! Make a sign, doodle on your chalkboard, wear a loaf of bread on your head. We don't care—just keep doing what you're doing to help your faithful followers find you. If you've got a line every day, you know how to bring them in.

Don't Miss Out!

Contact Caroline Sluyter today at (617-896-4832) or caroline@oldwayspt.org and join the Sampling Day fun.

No Contract To Sign, No Fee To Pay.

PAST WHOLE GRAIN SAMPLING DAY EXAMPLES

Inspiration from past creative ideas for every segment of the market!

Food Service



Guess the Grains Sampling Bar
Compass NA cafeteria

QSR



Buy One, Get One Free offer
Auntie Anne's

Healthcare



Chef Demo and RD Talk
Rex Healthcare



Duck Boat Sample Giveaway
Whole Grains Council

Food Mfr.



Facebook Sweepstakes
Better4U Foods

QSR



Twitter Giveaway
McDonald's

Supermarkets



Quiz Game, Whole Grain Prizes
Giant Eagle Supermarkets



Mayoral Proclamation
City of Boston

Universities



UMN Campus Flash Mob
Grains for Health Foundation