

This page was adapted from the government's website on the latest food pyramid.  
<http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/grains.html#>

## What foods are in the grain group?

Cereal grains can be eaten as is or in products like bread, pasta, oatmeal, breakfast cereals, tortillas, grits, and crackers. If a cereal grain is used to make the product it is considered part of the grain group.

The problem today is we tend to use more refined grain products which are not as healthy for us. Whole grains are a better way to eat.

### Whole grains

Whole grains contain the entire **grain kernel** \*\*-- the bran, germ, and endosperm. Examples include:

- whole-wheat flour
- bulgur (cracked wheat)
- oatmeal
- whole cornmeal
- brown rice
- Bread made with whole-wheat flour

\*\*Whole grain kernel is made up of

- An outer shell which is the Bran and contains fiber, B vitamins, and trace minerals
- The endosperm which contains the energy source, carbohydrates, and proteins
- The Germ which nourishes the seed and contains antioxidants, vitamin E and B vitamins

### Refined grains.

Refined grains have been milled, a process that removes the bran and germ. This is done to give grains a finer texture and improve their shelf life, but it also removes dietary fiber, iron, and many B vitamins. Some examples of refined grain products are:

- white flour
- degermed cornmeal
- white bread
- white rice

Most refined grains are *enriched*. This means certain B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, folic acid) and iron are added back after processing. Fiber is not added back to enriched grains. Check the ingredient list on refined grain products to make sure that the word "enriched" is included in the grain name. Some food products are made from mixtures of whole grains and refined grains.

It is a bit crazy to remove all the good stuff and then to put most of it back but not all. We really should be using the whole grain products.

For in depth information on food products including fruits and vegetables go to the government database and search for that product. It is a large database but does not contain every food item. You may have to use your own judgment to guesstimate nutritional information for a specific item.

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/search/>