



What foods are in the Grains Group?

Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley or another cereal grain is a grain product. Bread, pasta, oatmeal, breakfast cereals, tortillas, and grits are examples of grain products.



Grains are divided into 2 subgroups, Whole Grains and Refined Grains. Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel — the bran, germ, and endosperm. Examples of whole grains include whole-wheat flour, bulgur (cracked wheat), oatmeal, whole cornmeal, and brown rice. 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, de-germed cornmeal, white bread, and 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.

How many grain foods are needed daily?

The amount of grains you need to eat depends on your age, sex, and level of physical activity. Recommended daily amounts are listed in this table below. Most Americans consume enough grains, but few are whole grains. **At least half of all the grains eaten should be whole grains.**

Note: Click on the top row to expand the table. If you are on a mobile device, you may need to turn your phone to see the full table.

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DAILY GRAIN TABLE			
		DAILY RECOMMENDATION*	DAILY MINIMUM AMOUNT OF WHOLE GRAINS
Children	2-3 years old	3 ounce equivalents	1 ½ ounce equivalents
	4-8 years old	5 ounce equivalents	2 ½ ounce equivalents
Girls	9-13 years old	5 ounce equivalents	3 ounce equivalents
	14-18 years old	6 ounce equivalents	3 ounce equivalents
Boys	9-13 years old	6 ounce equivalents	3 ounce equivalents
	14-18 years old	8 ounce equivalents	4 ounce equivalents
Women	19-30 years old	6 ounce equivalents	3 ounce equivalents
	31-50 years old	6 ounce equivalents	3 ounce equivalents
	51+ years old	5 ounce equivalents	3 ounce equivalents

DAILY GRAIN TABLE			
		DAILY RECOMMENDATION*	DAILY MINIMUM AMOUNT OF WHOLE GRAINS
Men	19-30 years old	8 ounce equivalents	4 ounce equivalents
	31-50 years old	7 ounce equivalents	3 ½ ounce equivalents
	51+ years old	6 ounce equivalents	3 ounce equivalents

*These amounts are appropriate for individuals who get less than 30 minutes per day of moderate physical activity, beyond normal daily activities. Those who are more physically active may be able to consume more while staying within calorie needs.

What counts as an ounce-equivalent of grains?

In general, 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal, or ½ cup of cooked rice, cooked pasta, or cooked cereal can be considered as 1 ounce-equivalent from the Grains Group. The table below lists specific amounts that count as 1 ounce-equivalent of grains towards your daily recommended intake. In some cases the number of ounce-equivalents for common portions are also shown.

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OUNCE-EQUIVALENT OF GRAINS TABLE			
		AMOUNT THAT COUNTS AS 1 OUNCE-EQUIVALENT OF GRAINS	COMMON PORTIONS AND OUNCE-EQUIVALENTS
Bagels	WG**: whole wheat RG**: plain, egg	1" mini bagel	1 large bagel = 4 ounce-equivalents
Biscuits	(baking powder/ buttermilk -RG*)	1 small (2" diameter)	1 large (3" diameter) = 2 ounce-equivalents
Breads	WG**: 100% Whole Wheat RG**: white, wheat, French, sourdough	1 regular slice 1 small slice, French 4 snack-size slices rye bread	2 regular slices = 2 ounce-equivalents

OUNCE-EQUIVALENT OF GRAINS TABLE

		AMOUNT THAT COUNTS AS 1 OUNCE-EQUIVALENT OF GRAINS	COMMON PORTIONS AND OUNCE-EQUIVALENTS
Bulgur	cracked wheat (WG**)	½ cup, cooked	
Cornbread	(RG**)	1 small piece (2 ½" x 1 ¼" x 1 ¼")	1 medium piece (2 ½" x 2 ½" x 1 ¼") = 2 ounce-equivalents
Crackers	WG**: 100% whole wheat, rye RG**: saltines, snack crackers	5 whole wheat crackers 2 rye crisp breads 7 square or round crackers	
English muffins	WG**: whole wheat RG**: plain, raisin	½ muffin	1 muffin = 2 ounce-equivalents
Muffins	WG**: whole wheat RG**: bran, corn, plain	1 small (2 ½" diameter)	1 large (3 ½" diameter) = 3 ounce-equivalents
Oatmeal	(WG**)	½ cup, cooked 1 packet instant 1 ounce (1/3 cup), dry (regular or quick)	
Pancakes	WG**: Whole wheat, buckwheat RG**: buttermilk, plain	1 pancake (4 ½" diameter) 2 small pancakes (3" diameter)	3 pancakes (4 ½" diameter) = 3 ounce-equivalents
Popcorn	(WG**)	3 cups, popped	1 mini microwave bag or 100-calorie bag, popped = 2 ounce-equivalents

OUNCE-EQUIVALENT OF GRAINS TABLE ■

		AMOUNT THAT COUNTS AS 1 OUNCE-EQUIVALENT OF GRAINS	COMMON PORTIONS AND OUNCE-EQUIVALENTS
Ready-to eat breakfast cereal	WG**: toasted oat, whole wheat flakes RG**: corn flakes, puffed rice	1 cup, flakes or rounds 1 ¼ cup, puffed	
Rice	WG*: brown, wild RG*: enriched, white, polished	½ cup cooked 1 ounce, dry	1 cup, cooked = 2 ounce- equivalents
Pasta-- spaghetti, macaroni, noodles	WG**: whole wheat RG**: enriched, durum	½ cup, cooked 1 ounce, dry	1 cup, cooked = 2 ounce- equivalents
Tortillas	WG**: whole wheat, whole grain corn RG**: Flour, corn	1 small flour tortilla (6" diameter) 1 corn tortilla (6" diameter)	1 large tortilla (12" diameter) = 4 ounce-equivalents

*WG = whole grains, RG = refined grains. This is shown when products are available both in whole grain and refined grain forms.