



Grains of truth about BULGUR

Definitions

Bulgur is white or red, hard or soft, whole wheat kernels that have been soaked, boiled, dried, then removing 5 percent of the bran and cracking the remaining kernel into small pieces. The result is par-cooked, cracked wheat. Bulgur differs from cracked wheat in that it is pre-cooked.

History

Arab, Israeli, Egyptian and Roman civilizations record eating dried cooked wheat as early as 1,000 B.C. Evidence shows the Chinese ate this grain food as early as 2,800 B.C. The Roman word for bulgur is *cerealis*, after Ceres, the goddess of harvest; Israelites called it *dagan*, a word meaning “bursting kernels of grain;” other Mid-Easterners called it *arisah*, and it is a mainstay in the diet.

Availability

Bulgur is sold in supermarkets, in bulk bin commodity stores, health food stores and through mail-order under a variety of labels. Packaged in boxes or plastic bags, it may be sold as a pilaf or “tabbuli” mix and may be spelled a variety of ways. In the store, it can be found near the pasta, rice or hot cereal, or in a specialty food aisle.

Storage

Bulgur should be stored in air-tight containers in a cool, dry place. It will keep well at room temperature or in the refrigerator for five to six months. Frozen, it keeps indefinitely.

Preparation

- ◆ Do not wash or rinse bulgur before cooking.
- ◆ When cooking, avoid lifting the lid; bulgur needs no stirring.

- ◆ Bulgur can be soaked or cooked to be edible. Use twice the amount of liquid as bulgur. To soak, add hot liquid to bulgur, stir and let stand, covered, 30 minutes or overnight (refrigerated).

- ◆ Bulgur continues to swell after cooking if moisture is present. It more than doubles in volume, so be sure to use a large enough pan.

- ◆ Prepared bulgur can be refrigerated or frozen in containers for later use.

- ◆ Bulgur can be used in meatloaf, soups, stews, casseroles and meats or sauces for Mexican or Italian dishes. To start with, use one part prepared bulgur to two parts meat.

- ◆ Stir prepared bulgur into waffles, pancakes, muffins, salads or baked goods of all types to add a nutty flavor without the fat.

- ◆ Experiment with bulgur as a main entrée or side dish with seasonings, vegetables, nuts or small amounts of meats or fish.

To Cook:

STOVETOP

Serving	Bulgur	Water
1 (½ cup)	3 tablespoons	⅓ cup + 1 tbsp

Add water to bulgur; boil. Cover; simmer 15 minutes. Let stand 5 minutes.

MICROWAVE

Serving	Bulgur	Water
1 (½ cup)	3 tablespoons	¾ cup
<i>Add ¼ teaspoon oil and dash of salt</i>		

Combine ingredients in a 1½-quart microwave safe container. Cook on high 12 minutes, turning container every 2 minutes. Let stand 5 minutes.

Nutritional value

Bulgur adds fiber, protein and complex carbohydrate to the diet. A serving of bulgur equals 1 ounce (3 tablespoons) dry or ½ cup prepared. One serving provides:

Calories	76	Carbohydrates	17 g
Cholesterol	0 mg	Dietary Fiber	4 g
Fat	0 g	Folate	16 mcg
Iron	1 mg	Potassium	62 mg
Protein	3 g	Sodium	5 mg
Selenium	1 mcg		

Recipes

MEXICAN BULGUR

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 cup dry bulgur
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 cup thinly sliced celery
- ½ red bell pepper, diced
- ¾ teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 2 ¼ cups beef broth or water
- Salt and pepper to taste

Melt butter in skillet on medium heat. Add bulgur and chopped onion; cook until onion is clear and bulgur is golden. Stir in celery, diced pepper, cumin and chili powder; cook for 2 minutes.

Stir in beef broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes or until all liquid is absorbed; season to taste with salt and pepper. Makes 6 servings.

Nutrient Analysis: One serving provides approximately: 131 calories, 4 g protein, 20 g carbohydrates, 5 g dietary fiber, 5 g fat (3 g saturated), 10 mg cholesterol, 17 mcg folate, 1 mg iron, 191 mg potassium, 24 mg calcium and 373 mg sodium.

WHEAT-NUT PILAF

- 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- ¾ cup dry bulgur
- 1 cup beef or chicken broth or bouillon
- 2 medium carrots, shredded
- ¼ cup chopped walnuts, pecans, cashews or almonds

In a heavy saucepan, heat oil, add bulgur, and sauté 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Stir in broth, carrots and salt; bring to a boil. Cover; simmer 15 minutes. Remove from heat; let stand covered 5 minutes. Fluff and stir in nuts just before serving. Makes 4 servings.

Nutrient Analysis: One serving provides approximately: 178 calories, 5 g protein, 25 g carbohydrates, 6 g dietary fiber, 7 g fat (1 g saturated), 0 mg cholesterol, 10 mcg folate, 1 mg iron, 284 mg potassium and 229 mg sodium.

TABOULI

- 1 cup dry bulgur
- 1 ½ cups water
- 1 bunch green onions, chopped
- 1 cucumber, diced
- 3 tomatoes, seeded
- 1 bunch of parsley

Dressing

- ½ cup vegetable or olive oil
- ½ cup lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon salt

Add bulgur to water and bring to a boil; cover and simmer 15 minutes. Remove from heat; let stand covered 5 minutes. Mix vegetables with cooked bulgur.

Blend oil, lemon juice and salt and combine with bulgur mixture. Refrigerate at least 2 hours before serving. Makes 7 servings.

Nutrient Analysis: Each serving provides approximately: 227 calories, 3 g protein, 20 g carbohydrates, 5 g dietary fiber, 16 g fat (2 g saturated), 0 mg cholesterol, 31 mcg folate, 1 mg iron, 307 mg potassium, 350 mg sodium.



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