Food and Fitness



Whole Grains—Good or Bad?

The "grains are bad for you" war seems to have replaced the "eggs are bad for you, eggs are good for you" war—at least for the time being! In recent years grains, even whole grains, have been blamed for everything from obesity to diabetes to heart disease.



But before you slash whole grains from your healthy diet please remember that scientific studies say the opposite is true. Those who use more whole grains reduce the risk of heart disease and cancer.

Consuming whole grains has been shown to reduce, rather than raise, the chance of becoming obese. Whole grains have fewer calories than their refined alternatives (white four, white rice, white pasta, white bread), so cannot be blamed for the obesity epidemic.

Grains such as pasta and rice are a staple in the diets of runners. Think about it—have you ever seen a seasoned runner weighed down with extra body fat?

A small subset of the population, approximately 1%, suffers from Celiac Disease, a situation where **some** grains, not all, **can** pose a significant problem. Celiac Disease is an autoimmune disease. An unwanted immune response to gluten—a protein in wheat, barley and rye— can manifest itself in serious gastrointestinal symptoms.

The culprit is gluten, a protein found in wheat, bar-

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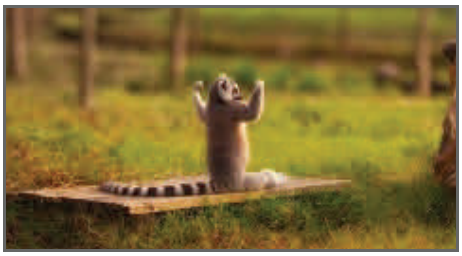
Websites of interest:

- **wholegrainscouncil.org**
- **csaceliacs.org**
- **go4life.niapublications.org**
- **pmri.org**

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Exercise Resource—Go4Life



Wouldn't it be great to have a resource for exercise tips—a place where you could find information about exercise? A place where...

- ...you can get ideas about starting an exercise program?
- ...you can learn about the different types of exercise?
- ...you can record and track your progress?
- ...you can watch instructional videos about weight training and flexibility?



There **is** such a place! The National Institute on Aging at the National Institutes of Health launched ***Go4Life*** in October 2011. ***Go4Life*** is an interactive website that helps you get moving and stay moving. You can find ***Go4LIfe at***: http://go4life.niapublications.org/



Visit their website. Click onto:

- "Get Started Today" to learn how to get started. It is divided into "Get Ready", "Get Set" and "Go".
- "Get Ready" - Learn about "Four Types of Exercise", "Stay Safe", and "Healthy Eating"—read about the 4 types of exercise: endurance, strengthening, flexibility, balance.

Start to visualize yourself with more energy, better fitness, and less risk for diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. Take their advice about how to stay safe while exercising and about healthy eating.

Then visit "Get Set" to:

- Find your starting point
- Set your goals
- Make a plan



You will learn how to find where you are so you will know where to start. You can set your personal goals. You will be di-

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Go4Life from the National Institute on Aging at NIH

Exercise Resource—Go4Life

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rected to set both short-term and long-term goals. Many of the questions you may have are answered by visiting "Common Questions".

After visiting "get READY" and "get SET", you are ready to "GO!". Click onto "Exercises to Try" and see detailed instructions on how to do the exercises or watch a video that shows you how to perform the exercise. Don't forget to include exercises from each of the 4 types of exercise in your plan.



In the "Go!" section, you can find a place to keep a daily record and track your activities. You can also get suggestions to help you "Keep Going" and check your progress. Need motivation? Don't hesitate to



click on "tip sheets". You will find many topics to read for information on a variety of aspects regarding exercise. For example, you can copy a *Go4Life* Buddy Agreement to set goals with your friends and commit to a fitness plan together. This will help motivate you and keep you on track.

Go4Life not only has information for individuals, but for families, friends, organizations, and health professionals. If have trouble getting to the website, or if you don't have a computer, ask for assistance at your library or Senior Center. There are resources that the center can use to develop a *Go4LIfe* plan for everyone to enjoy.





Go4Life from the National Institute on Aging at NIH

North African Cuisine—It's In the Spices!

Thinking back to your history lessons you might remember that the fall of the Roman Empire was complete by the year 439 AD. The Goths first destroyed a Roman army at the battle of Adrianople in 378 and went on to sack Rome in 410. The Vandals spread devastation in Gaul and Spain before conquering North Africa, the "breadbasket" of the Western Empire, in 439.

What does the term "breadbasket" mean and how does it affect the cuisine of the region? "Bread basket" refers to the ability of the land to grow and harvest a bountiful amount of food, especially grains.

The provinces in North Africa, covering vast swatches of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya formed the bread basket of the Roman Empire. While development of today's Sahara desert is rapidly expanding, there are still less well developed areas of these countries where you can get an idea of the fertile allure that it had for the Romans. (Source: http://www.travelhoppers.com/2012/01/20/the-bread-basket-of-the-roman-empire/)



The cuisine and the culinary style of North Africa are as diverse as the land, its people and its history. The roots to North African cuisine can be traced back over hundreds of years. Over several centuries traders, travelers, invaders, migrants and immigrants all have influenced this cuisine.

The Phoenicians of the 1st century brought sausages, the Carthaginians introduced wheat and its by-product, semolina. The Berbers adapted this into couscous, a staple of the diet. Olives and olive oils were introduced before the arrival of the Romans. From the 7th century onwards, the Arabs introduced a variety of spices, like saffron, nutmeg, cinnamon, ginger and cloves, which contributed and influenced the culinary culture of North Africa. The Ottoman Turks brought sweet pastries and other bakery products, and from the New World, North Africa got potatoes, tomatoes, zucchini and chili peppers. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_cuisine#North_Africa)



What makes the cuisine of this area so wonderfully different is the use of spices, many of which we already have on our shelves. Sometimes the familiar spices surprise the taste buds because they are used in a different way! Examples of the most common spices included in North African cuisine are cumin, curry, turmeric and

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North African Cuisine—It's In the Spices!

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cinnamon. Also popular in this type cooking are fresh herbs like parsley, dill and coriander or cilantro.

Special equipment:

The Tajine---also spelled Tagine---refers to both the cooking pot as well as the stew cooked in it. Featured in this month's newsletter is a classic tajine or stew prepared in Northern Africa, especially in Morocco. The tajine---the



cooking pot---consists of two parts: a round pot, traditionally made of clay, and a conical cover with a small hole, which allows some of the steam to escape.

The best-known North African dish abroad is surely couscous. This is a pasta dish of semolina traditionally served with a meat or vegetable stew spooned over it.



Couscous is a staple food throughout Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and west of Libya.

Properly cooked couscous is light and fluffy, not gummy or gritty.

Traditionally, North Africans use a food steamer to prepare this dish but the couscous that is sold in most Western supermarkets has already been pre-steamed and dried. In other words, most of the work is done! The package directions usually instruct to add boiling water or stock and butter to each measure of couscous and to cover tightly for 5 minutes.



The couscous swells and within a few minutes it is ready to fluff with a fork and serve. Pre-steamed couscous takes less time to prepare than regular couscous, most dried pasta, or dried grains such as rice. The packaged variety also offers a healthy bonus of low fat and added fiber. In the supermarket you can find two types of couscous: grainy or pearl-shaped.

A great quantity of fresh vegetables adds more diversity and good health to the cuisine. Included in this month's recipe corner are a North African variety of cabbage rolls and a Moroccan-style carrot salad.

Recipe Corner

Chicken Tagine with Seven Vegetables

This recipe is traditionally prepared in the clay tagine but also tastes great when baked in a large, covered casserole. Feel free to vary the vegetables according to what is available in your area.

1 medium eggplant, unpeeled, and cut into 1" slices

1 small chicken, cut into 8 pieces

3 Tbs. olive oil

3 large carrots, cut into 4-inch pieces



1 cup onion, diced

3 garlic cloves, finely chopped

2 cups medium-ripe tomatoes, cut into fourths

¼ cup golden raisins

2 Tbs. chopped fresh parsley

3 cups chicken stock

1 1/2 cinnamon sticks (3" long)

1 tsp. curry powder

1 tsp. ground cumin

1/4 tsp. ground turmeric

1/4 to ½ tsp. freshly-ground black pepper

1 medium zucchini, sliced or cut lengthwise



1 medium white turnip, cut in chunks

1/2 red bell pepper, cut in large slices

Place the sliced eggplant into a colander, salt it and let it drain for 20 minutes. Rinse well and set aside.

Remove all the skin and fat from the chicken pieces. Heat a large frying pan and add 1 tablespoon of the oil. Sauté the chicken in 2 batches until opaque on both sides (a few minutes). Set aside.



Layer carrots, onion, garlic, tomato, raisins, eggplant and 1 tablespoon of the parsley. Add the chicken stock, cinnamon sticks, curry powder, cumin, turmeric and black pepper. Add the chicken breasts, zucchini, turnip and red bell pepper, making sure all ingredients are covered by the top of the casserole.

Bake at 350, covered, for about one hour.

Salt and pepper to taste. Serve hot in deep soup bowls on top of rice, noodles or couscous, garnishing the top with the remaining parsley.

Modified from a recipe that first appeared in http://www.thegutsygourmet.net/natl-morrocco.html

Moroccan Carrot Salad

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Recipe Corner

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1 pound carrots, sliced (about 4 cups)

1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

¼ cup fresh lemon juice

1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro (or parsley)

2 to 4 cloves garlic, minced

1/2 tsp. ground cumin

1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon

1/2 tsp. paprika

Pinch of salt

1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper (optional)



Cook carrots in a small amount of water until they are tender but not soft, about five minutes. Drain and set aside. Combine remaining ingredients in a small jar, seal, and shake until mixed thoroughly. Pour over carrots; cover and let sit for about an hour so spices can permeate the carrots. Serve chilled or at room temperature.

http://www.epicurious.com:80/recipes/food/views/Moroccan-Raw-Carrot-Salad-231922#ixzz1m5qXDEa5

Couscous Salad

New and easy way to use leftover chicken.



2 cups fat-free chicken broth

1 (5.7-ounce) box uncooked couscous

2 cups cubed cooked chicken (about 2 breasts)



1/2 cup thinly sliced green onions

1/2 cup sliced radishes

1/2 cup chopped celery

1/4 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

2 Tbs. pine nuts, toasted

3 Tbs. tarragon vinegar

3 Tbs. extra virgin olive oil

1 tsp. ground cumin

1/2 tsp. salt

1/8 tsp. freshly ground black pepper

1 garlic clove, minced

¼ tsp. cinnamon

Bring broth to a boil in a medium saucepan; gradually stir in couscous. Remove from heat; cover and let stand 5 minutes. Fluff with a fork. Spoon couscous into a large bowl; cool slightly.

Add chicken, onions, radishes, celery, parsley, and pine nuts.

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Recipe Corner

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Toss gently to combine.

To prepare dressing, combine vinegar and remaining ingredients, stirring with a whisk. Drizzle dressing over salad; toss to combine.

Note: You can toast pine nuts quickly in a dry skillet over medium-high heat. Stir frequently, and as soon as they become fragrant, remove the nuts from the pan.

*Modified from a recipe by Barbara Lauterbach, **Cooking Light** MAY 2004*



Egyptian Cabbage or Mustard Green Rolls

1 small cabbage or 1# fresh mustard greens
2 medium onions, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 Tbs. peanut oil



1 pound ground beef, <5% fat
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
1/2 tsp. curry powder
3 Tbs. minced parsley
1 tsp. dried dill
1 cup white rice, soaked in water 5 minutes
1/4 cup lemon juice

Wash cabbage thoroughly. Boil water in a medium sized saucepan with 1 Tbs. salt. Peel off cabbage leaves and place in boiling water to blanch for 2 minutes.



Sauté onion and garlic in oil. As soon as onion is wilted add the meat and cook for 15 minutes. Add salt, pepper, curry, parsley, and dill to meat and mix well. Remove from stove, add rice and stir.

Cut large cabbage or mustard green leaves in half. Put 3 tablespoons meat and



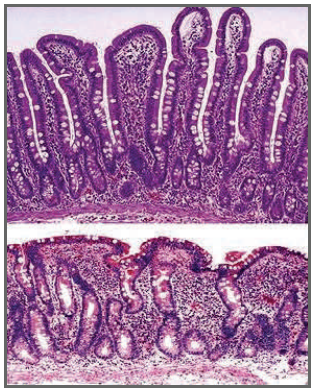
rice mixture into leaves. Roll tightly and put in deep saucepan. Add 2 cups hot water and lemon juice, steam on high for 30 minutes, then on medium for another 15 minutes. Serve hot.

Whole Grains—Good or Bad? (continued)

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ley and rye. These foods, and sometimes oats can trigger unwanted gastrointestinal symptoms. Symptoms can include diarrhea, abdominal pain, and bloating, especially after meals. Some people experience constipation and joint pain.

The gluten triggers an immune reaction in the gut of people with this autoimmune disease. So grains and any other foods containing gluten damage intestinal villi (tiny hair-like projections of the small intestine responsible for absorbing nutrients) and result in mal-absorption of nutrients. This can eventually cause weight loss and nutrient deficiencies.



Above—normal villi

Below—damaged villi

Diagnosis of celiac disease is made with a simple blood test while a person is still eating foods made from wheat, barley and/or rye. Tissue transglutaminase antibody (tTG), IgA class, is the primary test ordered to screen for celiac disease. The test is done again after treatment to determine progress in managing the disease.





While there is not yet a cure for celiac disease, the treatment is relatively simple—avoid gluten. Untreated, damage to small intestine may occur and can be serious and irreversible. Treated, the small intestine can start to heal.



It is recommended that people with other autoimmune diseases such as Type 1 diabetes and thyroid disease be tested for celiac disease periodically.

The simpler the diet, the better one is able to control the disease. Buying vegetables, fruits, nuts, beans, fish, poultry, meat, and oils with no added ingredients ensures that there is no gluten. Flours, cereals, breads, and crackers made from corn, rice, or soy are usually well tolerated. These products are available in many regular grocery stores as well as specialty or health food stores. Direct ordering from websites expands options.



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News You Can Use

Dr. Dean Ornish recently reported at the New York City Integrative Healthcare Symposium that comprehensive lifestyle changes can slow, stop, and even reverse early-stage prostate cancer. The lifestyle changes of which he spoke include a low fat vegetarian diet, exercise, stress management with yoga and meditation, and improving relationships with people. From his 35+ years of research published in major scientific journals Dr. Dean Ornish has shown that this lifestyle also slows, stops, and reverses heart disease. In some of his findings changing to an extremely healthy lifestyle turns on health-promoting genes, turns off disease-promoting genes, and controls aging.



