

Grain Free Diets

A Simple Approach to
Restoring Digestive Health





GUIDE TO EATING GRAIN-FREE

The Grain-Free diet is, as the name implies, a diet that requires cutting out the consumption of grains.

This is different than a gluten free diet, because there are grains that don't contain gluten as well as processes that remove gluten from grains. Grain-Free means that you will no longer be eating wheat, oats, corn, or any grain.

The negative impacts of grain on your health have been demonstrated in the form of adverse effects on your digestive system, immune system, and the overall function of your body. The process of cutting out grains hosts huge benefits that can be seen and felt quickly.

When you are looking to become a healthier person overall, it isn't just about losing weight. In many cases, you just want to be a well-rounded person in all areas of health and wellness, including feeling better from the inside out. This might lead you to switching up your diet by adding in more nutritious food options, but also taking some things away, like grains.

As people discover some of the negative implications of eating grains on a regular basis, they begin looking into possibly cutting them out. This has caused grain-free diets to become more popular and widely acceptable.

So, how does one start a Grain-Free diet? What are some of the implications, what benefits will be noticed, and how do grains negatively impact humans? All these questions will be answered, and, in addition, we will provide you with examples of great tasting grain-free meals to fit your lifestyle.



WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY GRAINS?

To start off, let's examine what a grain is.

For something to be technically considered a grain, it must be a seed, or part of a seed, derived from a type of grass, wild or cultivated.

This applies to corn, wheat, rice, and oats, in addition to several other grains.

What also falls under the category are grain-like foods, or pseudo-grains, such as rye or barley, which, despite not exactly coming from grasses, still behave the way grains do in our bodies.

There are two ways in which grains are processed into foods. Whole grain foods imply using the entirety of the grain, which retains all its nutritional benefits, such as its proteins and vitamins. Yes, grains do have health benefits, but are heavily outweighed by the issues that come with eating them.

The second, more common form of grains used in most foods, is refined. Refined grains, usually a type of wheat flour, removes the germ and the nutritional parts of the grain, leaving only the seed and its husk.

Typically, an easy way to distinguish grains from non-grain foods is to cut out all rice, oats, and related food items from your diet. While not the same as going gluten-free, many of the restrictions are going to be the same.



To make it simpler for you, you should cut out the following grains:

All forms of Rice
Oats
Barley
Rye
Buckwheat

Spelt
Millet
Corn
Wheat

Now that you have a better understanding of what grains are and which type you will no longer be eating, let's move on to the impact of grains, followed by some benefits of cutting them out.

HOW GRAINS CAN NEGATIVELY IMPACT YOU

Put simply, when our bodies try to process grains, it can lead to issues with our digestive systems, spikes and drops in sugar and energy levels, and other health-related problems in the long-term.

There is a reason behind each of these unfortunate results of consuming grain-based foods.

THE PROCESS OF DIGESTIVE GRAINS

Starting with digestion, it is important to understand the aspects of grains as well as the substances within them that have a negative impact on our digestive health.

Zonulin, a substance present in grains, acts in a way that increases the space between cells in the digestive tract. This results in excess proteins making their way into our bloodstream.



When this occurs, our immune system assumes it is under attack from disease and promotes inflammation throughout the body. This makes it tougher for our bodies to filter out toxins and waste.

AN IMBALANCE OCCURS

The result of grain consumption for our digestive system is an imbalance in gut bacteria, a bloated gut, and organs, such as our liver, failing to filter waste effectively.

The issues don't end there, however, because these results act as the damaging factor for other regions of our body.

When we feel ill, our energy levels drop. This isn't helped by the fact that loading up on sugars from the carbohydrates present in grains leads to an energy crash in and of itself.

The abundance of poor blood quality, digestive issues, and bloating leads to mental grogginess, feeling physically sick, and has been demonstrated to lead to more serious health problems.

Spikes in blood sugar or insulin levels can cause a person to become diabetic, poor constitution and varying immune levels make you more susceptible to diseases, and these maladies, combined with feeling groggy, can lead to depression.

If a disruption in gut bacteria health doesn't sound serious, you should consider that it is a pathway to stomach fungal infections, bacteria overgrowth, and makes it much more likely that you'll contract parasites.

It's also worth mentioning that our digestive systems have trouble effectively digesting the husk of the grain seeds that makes up most of grain products, which could be the reason behind your stomach aches.



BENEFITS OF GOING GRAIN-FREE

Now that you understand how grain damages our bodies and inhibits our health, cutting them also brings about benefits you might not have considered.

Besides negating the health concerns that come with consuming grains, you will notice that, in combination with a well-balanced and healthy diet, your skin will become healthier, you will stay feeling well and energized throughout the day, even in the afternoon, and your mood will consistently improve.

If grains have long been a staple in your diet, the benefits will be even more noticeable, and you will likely feel them much quicker than somebody who only ever had grains in moderation.

Regardless, partaking in the grain-free diet, alongside eating healthily throughout the day, will result in feeling, looking, and operating better.

Experience benefits on the inside and out when you go grain-free, including:

- Support a healthy heart
- Reduce hunger cravings
- Help improve your skin
- Give you a nice mood boost
- Provide more energy and less sluggishness
- Improve your mental health and clarity



HOT TO START CUTTING OUT GRAINS

In this day in age, just about everything contains grains. They are cheap in bulk, can be used in most foods, and are readily available throughout most of the world, making them super convenient for restaurants and food manufacturers to incorporate them into just about anything.

GETTING RID OF GRAINS

To start off, go to your cupboards and fridge and start checking labels.

If a food product contains grains, they will likely be within the first few ingredients. If you see anything resembling grains, such as cornmeal, rolled oats, wheat flour, or anything of the like, don't eat it anymore. It really is as simple as that, when it comes to eating at home.

If you are out and about and decide to stop at a restaurant or pick up some fast food, use your best judgment. If a food has bread, such as a sandwich or hamburger, then you know it has bread. There are ways to substitute the bread in some cases.

An easy trick to remember is that, if a product seems like it's made with the same stuff as bread, it's most likely a grain-based food product. Cereal, granola, and pasta are just a few examples. If you aren't sure about what's in your meal, just ask the restaurant or ask to see an ingredient list if they provide one.

Eating a grain won't kill you, unless you're allergic, but the whole point of this way of eating is to ensure, to the best of your ability, that you cut out grains as much as possible. That is the only way to start really feeling the benefits.



GRAIN-FREE MEAL PLAN IDEAS

Since you have decided to try going grain-free, you might as well put your best foot forward.

Unless you have a good idea of great tasting and well-balanced grain-free foods, you may be tempted to quit after eating nothing but carrots for a few days in a row.

BREAKFAST

In the morning, you have a wide variety of options. For a lighter breakfast, if you find yourself missing your morning toast or cereal, you can try a grain-free banana bread. It's tasty, slightly sweet, and can be made with your favorite nuts and fruits to give it all the nutrients you need to begin your day.

On the side, you can take yogurt and mix it with crushed nuts and whichever fruits you prefer a great tasting and nutritious parfait.

Maybe you prefer a hearty breakfast to keep you filled and satisfied in the morning. If that's the case, you can have the classic eggs and bacon. A perfect way to fuel yourself with protein, fats (in moderation), and the good form of cholesterol, known as HDL.

Feel free to substitute the bacon for a cut of ham or even a steak. A side of chopped potatoes with some vegetables can accompany your meal. You could even combine everything into one big omelet, if that suits you better.



LUNCH AND DINNER

There is a long list of great tasting meals that are completely grain-free or can easily substitute the grains for a healthier option.

Grilled or seared fish, such as salmon, alongside cooked vegetables. Chicken can be eaten grilled with lemon and pepper, or fried, using almond flour instead of bread and a healthier oil, such as grape seed. Chicken, ham, beef brisket, or braised pork can all be eaten either on their own or in a sandwich either wrapped in lettuce or made with a grain-free bread.

For those who prefer a lighter meal, or maybe are trying to cut back on their meat intake, there are a wide variety of delicious salads that can be easily prepared or ordered at most restaurants. Some contain a little meat, such as grilled chicken, tuna, or incorporate fish.

Many other salads consist only of plants, along with maybe some cheeses, dressings, or olive oil. Potato salads, fruit salads, and salads that include mandarin oranges, nuts, cranberries, and countless other ingredients are great choices for a light meal, any time of day.

Just remember, when preparing or ordering any of these food items, that sometimes grains are included unsuspectingly, due to how prevalent they are in everyday life.

In salads, for example, sometimes restaurants will include corn or quinoa, among other types of grains in their salads to add flavor and texture. This is often overlooked, so just remember to keep an eye out when ordering or preparing food.



FINAL THOUGHTS

Deciding to follow a grain-free diet is an excellent choice.

By choosing to follow this lifestyle, you will notice great benefits, assuming you do this in combination with living healthy in all aspects of life. Cutting down grains doesn't give us a free pass to eat a lot of chocolates and candy as a tradeoff. These have refined sugars and are also harmful if they aren't eaten only in moderation.

Keep a balanced diet, consisting of fruits, vegetables, and a good source of protein, preferably meat to counter-act the large intake of fibrous plants. Don't over consume fibre, but don't have too little either. The key, as stated before, is moderation. By practicing balance in your diet, you will notice the strongest results possible in combination with your grain-free diet.

Additionally, try to live an active life. In our daily lives, it can be very difficult to start exercising, let alone stick to a routine. If you just get up and at least walk or perform some basic callisthenic exercises every day, for just 20 to 30 minutes minimum, you will amplify the benefits of your grain-free diet.

Movement and mild strain on our muscles promotes healthy blood flow and has been proven to improve our digestive health, which are both among the biggest motivating factors for individuals trying the grain-free diet.

So, to all those who want to turn their life around, it's easier than it sounds. Cut out grains, enjoy foods without wheat, barley, oats, or corn, and live a happy, healthy, and comfortable life.