

Bulgur

Definitions

Bulgur is white or red, hard or soft, whole wheat kernels that have been soaked, boiled, and dried. Then, 5 percent of the bran is removed and the remaining kernel is cracked into small pieces. The result is parcooked, 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 mailorder 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 must 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 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. Or, as a wrap filling mixed with legumes.

To Cook: STOVETOP

Servings	Bulgur	Water
4 (½ cup)	1 cup	2 cups

Add cold water to bulgur; bring to boil. Cover; simmer 15 minutes or until tender. Let stand 5 minutes. Drain off excess liquid.

Nutritional Value

Bulgur contains fiber, protein and complex carbohydrates. A serving of bulgur equals 1 oz (1/4 cup dry or ½ cup prepared.)

One serving provides:

Calories	71	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	.5 mcg		

Source: USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 23 (2010)

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 99% fat-free, reduced sodium, beef broth or water
Salt and pepper to taste
Top with fresh salsa if desired

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:
134 calories, 5 g protein, 21 g carbohydrates, 5 g dietary fiber,
4 g fat (2.5 g saturated), 10 mg cholesterol, 20 mcg folate,
1 mg iron, 196 mg potassium, 24 mg calcium and 219 mg sodium.

WHEAT-NUT PILAF

1 tablespoon olive oil
¾ cup dry bulgur
1 cup 99% fat-free, reduced sodium, beef or chicken broth
2 medium carrots, shredded
¼ cup chopped walnuts, pecans, cashews, pine nuts 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:
184 calories, 5 g protein, 24 g carbohydrates, 6 g dietary fiber,
9 g fat (1 g saturated), 0 mg cholesterol, 20 mcg folate, 1 mg iron,
238 mg potassium and 138 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 olive oil
½ cup lemon juice
1 teaspoon salt (or less, to taste)

Add bulgur to cold water and bring to a boil; cover and simmer 15 minutes or until tender. Remove from heat; let stand covered 5 minutes. Drain excess liquid. 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:
232 calories, 3 g protein, 21 g carbohydrates, 5 g dietary fiber,
16 g fat (2 g saturated), 0 mg cholesterol, 8 mcg folate, 1 mg iron,
105 mg potassium, 340 mg sodium.