

YUMMY NORTHWEST

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Flour power

Is there any aroma better than homemade bread fresh from the oven?

For more than 17,000 years, people have been growing wheat and experimenting with ways to eat it. Although rice is a staple food of half of the world's population, it is second to wheat as the most widely cultivated crop. In the United States and Britain, most grain products are from wheat.

While some folks can't eat the gluten that makes bread so wonderful for the rest of us (see **Yummy Northwest**, February 2004), wheat remains an important food source in many forms.

Local mills

Go online to learn more about these local family-owned mills, then go to the store to try their wholesome products.

Wheat Montana, Montana

Three generations of farmers grow chemical-free wheat on 12,000 acres in central Montana. Their "impact milling" process smashes kernels of wheat in mid-air, producing wholegrain flour at cool temperatures to maintain optimal nutrition.



Wheat kernels, flour, and baked goods are sold online and at their deli and bakery in Three Forks, Montana.

Go to www.montanawheat.com to get recipes and learn more about the types of wheat. It's also worth visiting the Web site to see a photo showing how the family harvests wheat around the original farm homestead, showing something of their care for their environment.



National Homemade Bread Day November 14

Homemade bread can be simple to make with a mix. Bob's Red Mill and Wheat Montana have many to choose from, including gluten-free.

Steffanie's Mixes, produced in Covington, Wash., include quickbreads featuring flavors such as Pineapple Sweet Potato or Apple Pear.

Don't forget the cookies. Steffanie's Mixes come in enticing flavors, including Root Beer Candy and Butterscotch Candy (sugar cookies with crushed hard candies). Try the biscotti, too, in flavors like chocolate chunk or gingerbread.

For a complete product list, e-mail Steffanie at sgw73@yahoo.com.

Bob's Red Mill, Oregon

Somewhere near you are some of the 400 stone-ground whole-grain products, including a wide range of gluten-free and wheat-free items, produced by this mill. All products are available online or at the home store in Milwaukie, Oregon.

To learn more about the quartz millstones (as well as the products themselves) used in Bob's milling process, take the four-minute online tour at www.bobsredmill.com.

The Web site includes recipes as well as resources that discuss the advantages of being vegetarian, what is trans fat, and why you should eat flaxseed.

Fairhaven Flour Mill, Washington

Begun in 1974 as a cooperative in Bellingham, Washington, this mill is now operated by the Distler family to produce a wide array of wholegrain organic flours, including unusual ones such as blue corn meal and teff.

If you call ahead, you can buy flour at the mill, but it is also available at places like the PCC and Larry's Markets in Seattle, Terra Organica in Bellingham, and Haggen food stores (Top Food and Drug is one) throughout Washington and Oregon. Go to www.fairhavenflour.com to find a store near you.

Pataha Flour Mill, Washington

Go back in time to see a 19th-century mill in Eastern Washington. Built in 1878 and refurbished in 1998, the equipment was kept intact, as it was when the mill closed in 1943. The XXX brand produced here was the first patented flour, renowned nationwide for its high-protein content. (You can see their branded flour sacks in old Bugs Bunny cartoons.) A charming restaurant and gift shop are also on the premises. Call ahead for hours at (509) 843-3799.



Kernels of truth

One million kernels comprise a bushel of wheat. That bushel of wheat can become 42 pounds of white flour (or 60 pounds of whole-wheat flour) that can be made into 42 one-and-a-half-pound loaves of white bread or 90 one-pound loaves of whole-wheat bread.

Although there are several hundred varieties of wheat grown in the United States, there are only six classes of wheat, most named for the time of year they are planted and harvested and what they look like. Each class has characteristics that are best suited for certain types of baking.

On grocery shelves you'll mostly find all-purpose and high-gluten ("bread") flours. Go to the Wheat Montana Web site to find other types.

Hard red winter

The U.S.'s biggest export, this is good for breads and rolls.

Hard red spring

With the highest percentage of protein, this is excellent for breadmaking. A large part of this crop is grown in Montana.

Soft red winter

Its low protein content makes it good for flat breads and crackers.

Durum

A hard wheat that is made into semolina flour that is great for making pasta.

Hard white

This is good for yeast breads, hard rolls, and bulgar.

Soft white

Grown mainly in the Pacific Northwest, this is good for any kind of baking.

The protein content of wheat varies with the rainfall it gets and other growth factors. But you can expect it to contain about 13 percent protein if it is good enough to be made into bread. Flour containing lots of gluten, usually milled from spring wheat, is 40–45 percent protein with a low starch content. The high gluten content makes it ideal for breadmaking, but the high amount of protein means diabetics and others with insulin problems can better enjoy products made with it.

High-gluten flour is also used to make seitan, a vegetarian substitute for meat. (If you've had meaty vegetarian Chinese food, you've already eaten it.) Three ounces of seitan has 20 grams of protein, as much as in a 3-ounce steak but with less fat (seitan: 1.5 grams fat; wheat: 12 grams fat) and no cholesterol.

According to "Wheat Scoop" (December 30, 1999), Kansas produces enough wheat to make enough loaves of bread to feed over six billion people for two weeks.

Wheat is an amazing food that can literally feed the world.

Substitutions

Wheat is the most commonly used grain in breads and other baked goods, but alternatives are available.

For 1 cup white flour, you can substitute:

- 1 cup **whole wheat flour**, minus 2 tablespoons
- 3/4 cup **rice flour** with an addition of 1/4 cup **tapioca flour**
- 1 cup **spelt flour**
- 1 1/2 cups **barley flour**
- 1 1/2 cups **oat flour** (you can grind your own from whole oats using a blender or food processor; this is best used in heavier baked goods, such as brownies)

In any recipe, for 1 cup all-purpose flour, you can substitute 1/2 cup whole-wheat flour and 1/2 cup white flour.

Find it

Bob's Red Mill
Milwaukie, Ore.
(800) 349-2173
www.bobsredmill.com

Fairhaven Flour Mill
Bellingham, Wash.
(360) 734-9947
www.fairhavenflour.com

Pataha Flour Mill
50 Hutchens Hill Road
Pataha, Wash.
(509) 843-3799

Wheat Montana
Three Forks, Mont.
(800) 535-2798
www.wheatmontana.com

Tip

Bread goes stale quickly in the refrigerator. Keep it out on the counter or freeze it. If it's unsliced, put the cut side down on a breadboard to keep it fresh for a few days.

Wheat Chili

1 cup wheat berries
3 cups water
1 large onion, chopped
1/2 green pepper, chopped
1/2 yellow pepper, chopped
4 tsp. chili powder, or to taste
1/4 teaspoon hot pepper sauce
1/8 teaspoon black pepper
8-ounce can tomato sauce
28-ounce can tomatoes, diced
2 cups vegetable broth
15-ounce can kidney beans
15-ounce can white beans
Salt, to taste

Cook wheat in water for 1 hour until tender, adding additional water as needed. Drain and rinse with cool water.

In a saucepan, cook onion and peppers in a bit of oil.

In a 4-quart pot, combine wheat, vegetables, and remaining ingredients. Bring to a boil and simmer uncovered 1 hour or until desired consistency is reached, stirring occasionally.

Non-vegetarian version: Cook one pound of ground beef or turkey, drain, and add to the pot to simmer for 1 hour.

Serves 8.

Adapted from a recipe from the North Dakota Wheat Commission



New address!

You can now find us at our very own address at yummynorthwest.com.

About Yummy Northwest

Each monthly issue highlights an edible delight available in the Pacific Northwest.

Contact the editor

Comments, corrections, topic ideas, and submissions are all most welcome at Yummy_Northwest@hotmail.com.