

## WHEAT PRODUCTS



Whole wheat grains that have been cut into smaller pieces are called cracked wheat. This product also can be cooked like pilaf. Whole wheat berries are the whole grain minus the hull. They are generally cooked by boiling or simmering, but cooking time can be several hours. Soaking overnight will reduce the cooking time to about one hour.

Bulgur is a type of cracked wheat that has been partially cooked or parched. It is usually available in coarse, medium and fine granulations. Its cooking time is shorter than regular cracked wheat, and in fact, the fine granulations can be prepared simply by pouring boiling water over them and letting them stand for a half an hour. This type of bulgur is often served cold, mixed with lemon juice, olive oil, chopped scallions, and fresh herbs.

Other wheat or wheat type products include farro, which is actually an ancestor of modern wheat, available in whole-grain form; spelt, which is similar to, if not the same as, farro; and green wheat which can be cooked like cracked wheat. Couscous is not actually a grain, although it resembles one. It is made from wheat and is sort of a granular pasta. It is cooked by soaking and then steaming, using a fairly time-consuming process. Instant couscous is prepared simply by adding the dry product to hot or boiling water and letting it stand 5 minutes.

Quinoa is an ancient grain of the Inca Indians. Quinoa contains more protein than any other grain. It is considered a complete protein because it contains all eight essential amino acids. Quinoa is also higher in unsaturated fats and lower in carbohydrates than most grain, and provides a rich and balanced source of vital nutrients. Quinoa cooks like rice but in half the time and expands to four times its original volume. Quinoa can be used as a main dish, side dish, salad or in soups.

*From: "Professional Cooking" by Wayne Gisslen and "Food Lovers Companion" by Sharon Tyler Herbst*