

# Hard Red Wheat Berries

## From LoveToKnow Vegetarian

Hard red wheat berries are the seed of the wheat plant. While they are most often ground to be used as whole wheat flour, there are other ways to use this nutritious [food](#).



Wheat berries can be used for many dishes.

## Two Kinds of Hard Red Wheat Berries

There are actually two kinds of hard red wheat berries. Each can be used for bread but results will be slightly different.

- Spring: Hard red spring wheat has a higher protein content than the winter wheat and is a better substitute for [bread flour](#) when making sandwich loaves. However the protein content is not conducive to making artisan style European bread.
- Winter: Hard red winter wheat has a slightly lower protein content than the spring. This makes it great for mixing with other flours like rye and using a starter to produce Old World style breads.

The protein gluten contained in the wheat berry is what allows the dough to become elastic, rise, and hold its shape. It is also the substance that [seitan](#) is made from. Seitan is a pure form of gluten that, when cooked and seasoned, is very similar in texture to beef. The harder the berry the more gluten it contains.

For [sprouting](#) or cooking uses it doesn't matter which wheat berry you choose. Both will have a similar flavor, texture, and nutritional profile.

## Nutritional Profile of Hard Red Winter Wheat

Nutrition Content per Cup	
Calories	628
Fat	2.96g
Protein	24.21g
Carbohydrates	136.67
Fiber	23.4
Calcium	6 percent of the RDA
Iron	34 percent of the RDA

The nutrients in spring wheat are very similar, with the protein content being 29.57, slightly higher than the winter wheat.

## How to Use Wheat Berries

Different cultures have depended on wheat berries for thousands of years. From bread to side dishes, wheat is a staple of any kitchen. Their sweet, nutty flavor makes them a perfect breakfast food. Some ways to use wheat berries are:

- Sprouting
- Cracked wheat for a hot cereal
- Cooked as a grain side dish

# Sprouting Wheat Berries

Sprouting wheat berries gives them a sweet flavor. The sprouts should be allowed to get from 1/3 inch to 3/4 inch long.

1. Place 1/4 cup of wheat berries in a quart jar. Fill with lukewarm water.
2. Place a screen or cheesecloth over the jar top. Screw on lid and drain through the cheesecloth.
3. Fill with lukewarm water and allow to stand for about an hour and a half to two hours.
4. Drain and rinse the wheat berries.
5. Make sure the wheat berries are drained well and set the jar on its side in a warm, dark place.
6. Rinse the berries and drain once in the morning and once in the afternoon for about four days or until sprouts form.
7. Rinse, drain, and keep refrigerated.

## Tips for Adding Wheat Berries to Your Diet

- Wheat berries are an incomplete protein and they need to have a legume like dried beans or lentils, cheese, or [seeds/nuts](#) to make the protein complete.
- They can be used in place of rice, corn, or other grains in [most recipes](#).
- When using them in salads allow the dish to stand overnight in the refrigerator to absorb flavor from the other ingredients.
- If you are interested in grinding your own flour from wheat berries you will want to look at the various grinders on the market. These can be very loud so read the reviews.
- Wheat berries can be mixed with rice and other grains for pilaf.
- Tabbouleh is made from cracked wheat berries.

## Recipes for Wheat Berries

There are numerous recipes on the Internet that utilize wheat berries in salads, side dishes, breads, and more. Here are some that may interest you:

- [Red Wheat berry Salad](#)
- [Alton Brown's basic wheat berries](#)
- [Wheat berries and lentils](#)
- [Wheat berry breakfast bowl](#)
- [Wheat berries with spices and almonds](#)

## Red Wheat Berry Salad



Some good friends of ours recently asked us for this recipe. They planned to serve it at a family Easter dinner. We met with them yesterday and it sounds like they loved it. It had been a little while since we last made it, so we decided to put some red wheat berries to soak last night before bed.

As I sit here with a full belly writing this, I sure am glad we did. This is a delicious whole grain salad. The texture of the wheat berries, wild rice, pecans, and cranberries is fantastic. The flavor combination is wonderful. If you have never tried a wheat berry salad then this is a great way to do so. I usually serve it over a bed of fresh spinach, and accompany it with grilled shrimp. Toss the spinach in some olive oil and lightly salt it with a pinch of kosher salt before topping it with the wheat berry salad.

### *Ingredients:*

- **1 cup** hard red winter wheat berries, soaked overnight
- **1/2 cup** raw wild rice
- **2/3 cup** toasted chopped pecans
- **1 cup** dried cranberries
- **1/2 cup** chopped fresh parsley
- **1/2 cup** chopped green onions
- **3 tbs** fresh lemon or lime juice
- **1 tbs** honey
- **1 tbs** dijon mustard
- **1 tsp** kosher salt
- **1/2 tsp** ground black pepper

### *Preparation:*

1. Soak the wheat berries overnight in cold water, covering them 3 inches. Drain the water in the morning.
2. Boil the wheat berries in 6 cups of water for about 50 to 60 minutes, or until tender. Add more water as necessary to keep wheat berries covered during cooking. Drain excess water from the wheat berries when done.
3. In another small pot, boil 2 cups of water. Add the wild rice and simmer for about 45 minutes, or until the rice begins to split. I prefer to undercook the wild rice slightly so that it retains some structure. Drain excess water.
4. Combine the cooked wheat berries and wild rice in a large bowl.
5. Whisk the lime juice, honey, mustard, salt, and pepper to make the dressing. Add the dressing to the wheat berries and wild rice, mix thoroughly.
6. Now add the cranberries, pecans, parsley, and green onions and combine well.

# Basic Cooked Wheat Berries

- **Cook Time:**

50 min

- **Level:**

Easy

- **Yield:**

4 cups

## Ingredients

- 2 cups wheat berries
- 4 cups water
- 2 tablespoons salt 🇺🇸

## Directions

Place all ingredients into a pressure cooker and cook on high heat until hissing begins and pressure rises. Lower heat to maintain hissing and cook for 45 minutes.

# Cumin-Scented Wheat Berry-Lentil Soup



**6 servings, 1 2/3 cups each**

**Active Time:** 45 minutes

**Total Time:** 45 minutes

## Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups French green or brown lentils, sorted and rinsed (see Tip)
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 4 cups cold water
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 large carrots, finely chopped
- 1 medium red onion, diced
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper, plus more to taste
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 1/2 cups Cooked Wheat Berries, (recipe follows)
- 1 bunch rainbow or red chard, large stems discarded, leaves roughly chopped
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice

## Preparation

1. Combine lentils, broth and water in a Dutch oven. Bring to a boil over high heat, reduce heat, cover, and simmer gently until the lentils are tender, but not mushy, 25 to 30 minutes (brown lentils take a little longer than green).
2. Meanwhile, heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add carrots, onion, salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables begin to brown, about 15 minutes. Add garlic and cumin and cook, stirring constantly, for 30 seconds more. Remove from the heat.
3. When the lentils are tender, stir cooked wheat berries and chard into the pot. Cover and simmer until the chard has wilted, about 5 minutes. Stir in the carrot mixture and lemon juice.

## Tips & Notes

- **Make Ahead Tip:** Store in an airtight container in the freezer for up to 1 month.
- **Tip:** French green lentils are firmer than brown lentils and cook more quickly. They can be found in natural-foods stores and some supermarkets.

## Nutrition

**Per serving:** 250 calories; 8 g fat (1 g sat, 5 g mono); 0 mg cholesterol; 36 g carbohydrates; 9 g protein; 9 g fiber; 617 mg sodium; 433 mg potassium.

**Nutrition Bonus:** Vitamin A (160% daily value), Fiber (36% dv), Folate (26% dv), Vitamin C (25% dv), Iron (20% dv).

2 Carbohydrate Serving

**Exchanges:** 2 Starch, 1 Vegetable, 1 1/2 fat

# Rice, Red Lentil, and Wheat Berry Salad

- **Cook Time:**

1 hr 30 min

- **Yield:**

4 to 6 main course servings

## Ingredients

- 1/3 cup wheat berries
- 1 teaspoon canola oil
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup red lentils, rinsed in a strainer
- 3/4 cup basmati or jasmine rice, rinsed in a strainer

## The dressing:

- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 2 large garlic cloves, put through a press or minced
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Generous seasoning freshly ground pepper
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 1 carrot, minced
- 1 red bell pepper, very finely diced
- 1/2 cup minced fresh parsley

## Directions

Soak the wheat berries overnight, or, as an alternative, place them in a saucepan half filled with water and boil them for 2 minutes, then remove them from the heat and let sit 1 hour. In either case, drain them, then refill the saucepan halfway with water and cook the wheat berries, partially covered, for 1 hour. When done, the wheat berries will be tender but slightly crunchy. Drain them thoroughly and let them cool.

Bring 2 cups of water, the canola oil, and salt to a boil in a mediumsize saucepan. Stir in the lentils and rice and reduce the heat to low. Cover the pan and cook for 17 minutes, or until all the liquid is absorbed. Do not stir the mixture at all while it is cooking. Carefully spoon the mixture into a large bowl and let cool to room temperature.

Meanwhile combine the dressing ingredients in a jar with a tightfitting lid and shake vigorously. Set aside.

When the rice mixture is completely cooled, use a large spoon to break up any clumps that have formed. Carefully stir in the wheat berries, carrot, red pepper, and parsley. Pour the dressing on the salad and toss. Let marinate at least 20 minutes before serving. (Note The rice greedily soaks up the dressing, so if you want to make this salad 2 to 24 hours in advance, pour on only half the dressing at first, then add the remainder about 20 minutes before serving.)

# Wheat Berry Breakfast Bowl Recipe



This is better than milk and dry cereal, I promise. Thin slices of sautéed pears, ruby-hued cranberries, and plump, golden wheat berries are sweetened with generous dollops of maple-sweetened yogurt and finished with plenty of toasted pecans and a sprinkling of dried persimmons, ginger, and dates. You get just enough crunch from the pecans to play off the chewiness of the wheat berries, and just enough sweetness from the maple yogurt to play off the tart edge of the cranberries. While I've been enjoying individual-sized portions of this in my breakfast bowl, I imagine it would be quite stunning served on a platter family-style at the next brunch I attend.

You can prep a good portion of this recipe a day or two before, if needed. Pre-cook the wheat berries, toast the pecans, make the maple yogurt and chop the dried fruit. That leaves just two things prior to serving - heating the wheat berries, and cooking the pears and cranberries. Also, for a slightly more decadent version do a maple-sweetened mascarpone in place of the yogurt. You can also experiment with other fruit depending on the season. I'm imagining that a cherry or berry version of this would be delicious. And play around with different nuts (or combination of nuts)...

## Wheat Berry Breakfast Bowl

*I used red anjou pears here, but any firm, flavorful pear will do. Also, this recipe calls for wheat berries but don't get discouraged if you can't find them (check the bin section at Whole Foods Market or natural foods stores) - any plump, whole grain will do - farro, barley, oat groats, etc.*

1 cup Greek yogurt  
1/4 cup maple syrup

scant tablespoon of extra-virgin olive oil  
scant tablespoon of butter

2 firm pears, cored and chopped into 1/4-inch THIN bite-sized slices  
1/2 cup fresh cranberries  
3 cups cooked wheat berries\* (see head notes for alternatives)

1/2 cup toasted pecans

1/2 cup assorted dried fruits, chopped (I used equal portions of dried persimmons, dates, and crystallized ginger)

Whisk the yogurt and maple syrup together and set aside.

In a large skillet over medium-high heat, sauté the pear slices in the olive oil and butter for about five minutes, or until they get a bit golden. Keep an eye on them though, because they can burn in a flash. Toward the very end, stir in the cranberries and cook for another minute or so - just until the cranberries soften up a bit and a few of them begin to split open. Add the wheat berries to the skillet and toss gently.

Turn out onto a platter, or serve in individual bowls ladled with a generous amount of the maple yogurt, and sprinkled with plenty of pecans and dried fruit. For those of you who prefer a bit more sweetness, serve with more maple syrup on the side.

*Serves 4-6.*

\*To cook wheat berries: Combine 2 cups wheat berries, 6 cups water, and 2 teaspoons salt in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil, lower the heat, and simmer, covered, until plump and chewy (and a few of the berries split open), about an hour or so. The berries will stay al dente, and the only way to be sure they're done is to taste a few. Drain and set aside.

# Wheatberries with Fragrant Spices, Currants & Almonds

You can serve this dish as a pilaf-like side dish or as a vegetarian main dish. I also use it to stuff poultry and vegetables, such as baked red peppers and tomatoes. Serves four to six as a side dish. Yields 4 cups.

1/2 cup wheatberries, soaked for 4 hours or overnight  
Kosher salt  
2 Tbs. olive oil or unsalted butter  
1/2 medium onion, chopped into medium dice  
4 scallions (white and light green parts only), chopped  
1/4 tsp. ground allspice  
1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon; more to taste  
1/2 cup basmati or other long-grain white rice  
1/3 cup dried currants or coarsely chopped raisins  
3/4 cup homemade or low-salt canned chicken or vegetable broth  
1-1/2 oz. (1/3 cup) slivered almonds, toasted  
2 Tbs. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley  
1 Tbs. grated lemon zest  
Freshly ground black pepper

---

Drain the wheatberries. In a small saucepan, bring the wheatberries and 3 cups salted water to a boil. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer until tender but pleasantly chewy, 25 to 50 minutes. Drain well.

Meanwhile, heat the oil or butter in a small saucepan over medium low. Add the onion and scallions; cook until tender and translucent, about 7 minutes. Stir in the allspice, cinnamon, and rice, cook until the spices are fragrant, 1 to 2 minutes, and then add the currants or raisins, the broth, and salt to taste. Bring to a boil, turn the heat to low, cover, and simmer until the liquid is just absorbed and the rice is tender, 12 to 15 minutes.

In a bowl, combine the wheatberries, rice mixture, and almonds. Stir in the parsley and lemon zest and adjust the salt, pepper, and cinnamon to taste.

## Serving Suggestions

If you're planning to use this recipe as a stuffing, it yields enough to stuff about two 3 to 4-lb. chickens, 6 bell peppers, or 10 to 12 tomatoes.

**Nutrition information** (per serving):

Size: per 1/2 cup serving; Calories (kcal): 180; Fat (g): 7; Fat Calories (kcal): 60; Saturated Fat (g): 1; Protein (g): 5; Monounsaturated Fat (g): 4; Carbohydrates (g): 29; Polyunsaturated Fat (g): 1; Sodium (mg): 80; Cholesterol (mg): 0; Fiber (g): 5;