

# Grains

## Did You Know

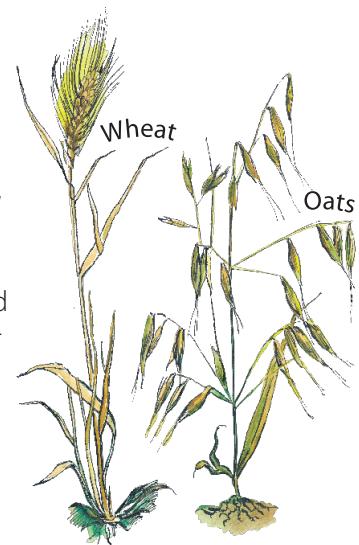
- Montana fields grow an impressive amount of grains including wheat, barley, oats, and corn. Montana is the 3rd top producer of wheat and barley, 17th for oats, and 37th for corn. Wheat production in 2013 was valued over \$1.3 billion, which includes 203,070,000 bushels!
- Wheat is classified by the season in which it is grown, hardness, color, and other factors (e.g., hard red winter wheat). Spring wheat is planted in spring and harvested in late summer. Winter wheat is planted in the fall and harvested in the spring or summer, depending on the conditions. Spring wheat is the most common in Montana, accounting for over half of our wheat production.
- Kamut, grown in Montana, is an ancient variety of wheat and is an excellent source of the mineral selenium.
- Barley has played an important role in many cultures throughout history. In ancient Egypt, barley was used in religious ceremonies, while in Rome, gladiators believed barley gave them extra strength.
- What's in a bushel? One US bushel is approximately 8 gallons of dry crops. One bushel of wheat weighs about 60 pounds.

## Buying Tips

The process of refining grains to make flour and other products removes the fiber and some of the nutrients from the grain. Therefore, select at least half of your grains from whole grain sources. Whole grain sources include whole wheat bread, oatmeal, whole corn, and hulled barley. Although whole refined grains are enriched—the nutrients are added back in after processing—they are lacking in the fiber of the original whole grain. Most grains are rich in carbohydrates and fiber and contain many minerals, B vitamins, and folic acid. Fiber is necessary to maintain a healthy digestive system. Keep whole grains and flour stored in a cool, dry place in airtight containers. To extend shelf life, store in the refrigerator or freezer. Montana grains are available year-round and in a variety of forms.

## Cooking

Add fiber, flavor, texture, and nutrients by including cooked wheat berries, barley, and other grains in salads, soups, pilafs, and stir-fries. To cook wheat berries, wash and soak for 10-12 hours in water prior to use. Use 1 cup wheat berries to 4 cups water or broth, bring to a boil then simmer for 45-60 minutes. Yields approximately 3 cups.



## Conversation Starters

I'm thinking of a grain ....

Describe a favorite and healthy grain (cereal, oatmeal, pasta, bread, tortilla, etc.) by using words such as "healthy," "crunchy," "creamy." For example, I'm thinking of a healthy grain that I love to eat at breakfast.

Try and guess.

My favorite grain is round and brown and floats in my bowl of milk at breakfast. What grain am I? (Answer: Cheerios). Encourage your child to describe his/her favorite grain.



## Dig Deeper

For sources and photo credits along with more recipes, lessons, quick activities, resources, and guides, visit: [mtharvestofthemonth.org](http://mtharvestofthemonth.org).

# Oatmeal breakfast bars

Six servings

Ingredients:

2/3		Two Thirds (2/3) of a Cup of Old Fashioned Oats
1/3		One Third (1/3) of a Cup of Whole Wheat Flour
1/2		One Half (1/2) of a Teaspoon of Cinnamon
1/3		One Third (1/3) of a Teaspoon of Baking Powder
1		One Pinch of Salt
1/2		One Half (1/2) Cup of Milk (any kind- rice, soy, almond, cow, etc.) - or water
1+1		One Tablespoon of Brown Sugar plus One Teaspoon of Brown Sugar
3		Three Tablespoons of Applesauce
1		One Large Egg
1/3		One Third (1/3) of a Teaspoon of Vanilla Extract
1/2		Optional - One Half (1/2) Cup of Dried Fruit (cranberries, raisins, cherries, etc.)
3		Optional - Three Tablespoons of Nuts (walnuts, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, etc.)

Tools:



Directions:

- 1 Preheat oven to 375°F.
- 2 Place the oats, flour, cinnamon, salt, and baking powder in a bowl and stir to combine.
- 3 In a separate bowl, mix the milk, applesauce, egg, sugar, and vanilla.
- 4 Pour the dry ingredients into the wet mixture, stir to combine and then stir in the dried fruits and nuts.
- 5 Pour the oatmeal mixture into a greased baking dish.
- 6 Bake for 30 minutes or until thickened and golden.
- 7 Cool, cut into squares, and serve.
- 8 Refrigerating: allow to cool, cut into squares, place in an airtight container and refrigerate up to 5 days. Freezing: allow to cool, cut into squares, and place in a plastic bag to freeze up to 4 months. When ready, allow to defrost in fridge for 24-48 hours.



## 2 Montana Harvest of the Month: Grains



The Montana Harvest of the Month program showcases Montana grown foods in Montana communities. This program is a collaboration between Montana Farm to School, Office of Public Instruction, Montana Team Nutrition Program, National Center for Appropriate Technology, Montana State University Extension, Gallatin Valley Farm to School, FoodCorps Montana, and Montana Department of Agriculture. More information and resources are available at: [mtharvestofthemonth.org](http://mtharvestofthemonth.org).

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