

Harvest of the Month at Home

Rye



Did You Know

- Rye is a grass that is grown primarily as a cereal grain.
- Rye is a whole grain that contains lots of fiber and nutrients.
- The whole grains harvested from the rye plant are known as rye berries.
- In the United States, a lot of rye is grown as a cover crop. A cover crop is a plant grown to cover the soil, primarily to improve soil health, prevent erosion, suppress weeds, and enhance biodiversity. Cover crops are not harvested and consumed.



Types of Rye

Rye Berries

Whole rye kernels are called rye berries. They have a nutty, earthy flavor and stay firm yet tender when cooked. Rye berries can be used in salads, grain bowls, soups, or even a rye-style risotto.



Cracked Rye or Rye Chops

Cracked rye is made by cutting rye berries into smaller pieces, which reduces cooking time. It's commonly used in rye breads or cooked as a hot cereal, similar to steel-cut oats.



Rye Flakes

Rye flakes are steamed, rolled, and dried rye berries—similar to rolled oats. They can be cooked into porridge or used in muesli and granola.



Rye Flour

Rye flour varies depending on how much bran and germ remain after milling. It contains less gluten than wheat flour and behaves differently in baking. Rye breads often improve in flavor and texture after resting 24–36 hours.



Agriculture

This rye field is part of several hundred acres grown at Vilicus Farms in northern Hill County, Montana. Doug Crabtree and Anna Jones-Crabtree (the people pictured standing in the field) are the farmers who own Vilicus Farms. While rye is not widely grown in Montana, it is a staple grain in countries such as Finland and Germany.

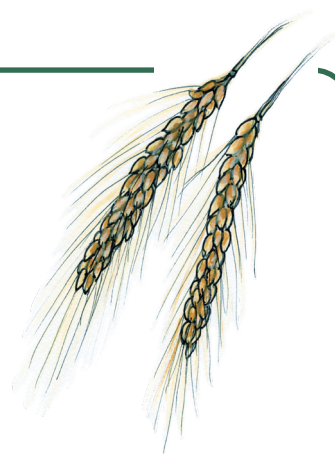
Rye thrives in Montana's cold, dry climate. The crop grown here is winter rye, planted in autumn. It goes dormant during the harsh winter, resumes growth in spring, and is harvested by August.

Buy local! Purchasing Montana-grown grains like rye supports local farmers. It also means fresher food with more flavor, since it travels a shorter distance to reach your plate—and you know exactly where it comes from.



Storage

Rye berries, cracked rye, and/or rye flakes should be stored at room temperature in an airtight container. They will keep for at least 6 months in a cool, dry spot. For longer storage, you can freeze the uncooked rye berries in an airtight container or freezer bag for up to a year. Cooked rye berries can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 5 days. For longer storage, transfer the completely cooled, cooked rye berries to a freezer bag. Tightly seal and freeze for up to 3 months.



Cooking

Cooking Rye Berries:

Rinse 1 cup of rye berries in a fine mesh strainer. Fill a medium saucepan with water and bring to a boil. Add ½ teaspoon of fine salt and the rye berries. Bring back to a boil and then reduce to a simmer. Cook until the rye berries are tender but still firm, about 45- 60 minutes. The only way to know that they are done to your liking is to taste them. If you would like them to be softer, keep cooking.



Should I Soak Rye Berries Prior to Cooking?

Some recipes suggest soaking the rye berries overnight in a covered bowl of cold water prior to cooking. The idea is to reduce the cooking time and make them easier to digest and the nutrients more bioavailable. Soaking is not necessary, but you certainly can if you are thinking ahead.

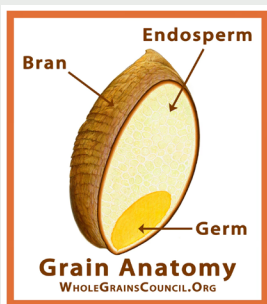
Cooking Rye Chops or Flakes: Bring 3 cups of water to boil. Add 1 cup of flakes or chops. Reduce to a simmer and cook until tender approximately 25-30 minutes for flakes, 35 minutes for chops. Add water as necessary to avoid sticking to the bottom of the pan.

Baking with Rye Flour: As a general rule, you can substitute up to one-third of the all-purpose flour in a recipe with rye flour and not have to make any significant modifications to the recipe or the baking process.

Nutrition Information

Rye is high in fiber. If you eat one half cup of rye, it can provide up to 50% of what you need for the whole day! What is especially cool about rye is that it contains an abnormal amount of fiber in the endosperm, not just the bran. Rye is considered an excellent source of protein and is rich in vitamins and minerals.

Rye is low on the glycemic index. The rise of blood glucose after eating rye is less compared to that produced from wheat. Rye is much lower in gluten than wheat, but it is still not recommended for those with a gluten allergy.



Recipe

Rye Meatballs

Yield: 14-16 (1.5 oz) meatballs

Ingredients

- 1 lb. Ground beef (93%)
- ½ C Precooked rye berries
- ¼ C Yellow onion
- 2 tsp Garlic clove
- ¼ C Oat flour (or AP)
- 1 ½ tbsp Nutritional yeast
- ¼ tsp Black pepper
- 1 tsp Dried oregano
- ½ ¼ tsp Kosher salt

Preparation

1. Rough chop and then pulse the onion, cooked rye, and garlic in a food processor to the desired consistency, scraping the sides often.
2. In a mixing bowl, add the ground beef, onion mixture, flour, nutritional yeast, salt, pepper, and oregano. Knead until all ingredients are fully combined.
3. Portion into about 1.3 - 1.5 oz meatballs and arrange evenly onto a parchment lined sheet tray.
4. Bake at 400°F for 10 minutes. Remove from the oven and rotate each meatball. Cook for another 10 minutes or until the internal temperature reaches 160°F.

Dig Deeper

For sources and photo credits along with more recipes, lessons, quick activities, resources, and guides, visit: mtharvestofthemonth.org.

Here are sources of the rye information in this handout

- wholegrainscouncil.org
- ancientgrains.com/rye/rye-nutritional-benefits
- true-north-kitchen.com/the-essential-guide-to-cooking-and-baking-with-rye-with-recipes
- ryerevival.org/rr-history
- vilicusfarms.com

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