

Make the Most of Pasta Month!

Did you know that October is National Pasta Month? Celebrate with these cooking and shopping tips!

Pasta and Nutrition:

Choosing whole grain pasta is a great way to follow MyPlate's advice and make at least half of the grains you eat whole grains, every day. Plus, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that people "Increase whole-grain intake by replacing refined grains with whole grains."

Whole wheat pasta is a good source of fiber, manganese, and selenium. It also has protein, thiamin and other B vitamins, copper, zinc, magnesium, and more. It's a nutrition powerhouse!

Whole grain pastas like brown rice pasta and quinoa pasta are great gluten-free options.

Shopping for Whole Grain Pasta:

The nutrition facts label and ingredient lists are your friends! Many manufacturers call a pasta "whole grain," but then they combine whole grain flours with refined flours, making a product that's only partially whole grain. Look for claims like "100% whole grain" or "100% whole wheat" on the label.

You can also check the list of ingredients. Look for whole wheat or whole grain flour as the main ingredient, then make sure that there are no processed flours further down the list. This will help you choose a fully whole grain pasta.



Cooking Whole Grain Pasta:

Shorter pasta shapes are easier to introduce if you are transitioning from refined grains to whole grains. Shapes like penne and macaroni tend to break less often than their longer counterparts (I'm looking at you, spaghetti) and their texture is much more appealing.

If you partially cook your pasta in boiling water and then finish it in the sauce, you will get a better texture and a more robust flavor than you would if you used more traditional methods. You could also combine whole grain pasta with water in a shallow pan, then top it with the same amount of sauce. Cover the pan and bake it for 45 minutes and you'll have a healthful and tasty meal at your fingertips.

There's no better day than today to get started! How will you celebrate National Pasta Month?

By Judy Doherty, PC II

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