

Health Benefits of Barley



Barley is a chewy cereal grain with the consistency of al dente pasta. Although it is highly nutritious and has been cultivated more than 10,000 years, it is one of the lesser-used grains in American diets. Barley is a great addition to soups, stews, casseroles and baked goods. It is available in different forms including hulled, pearled, Scotch or flaked. Fermented barley is commonly used in beer-making.

Hulled: Although the outer-most hull is removed, the bran is left intact, therefore retaining the most nutrition and qualifying hulled barley as a whole grain

Pearled: Polishing (as if in pearls) removes the hull and bran layers, and depending on how long the grain is polished, can also remove nutrients. Pearled barley is not considered a whole grain

Scotch: Falls between hulled and pearled in processing, removing hull but with less polishing, retaining more nutrients than pearled. Scotch is also known as “pot barley” since it is mainly used in soups

Flaked: The barley grain is flattened and sliced, similar to rolled oats. It can be made from hulled or pearled barley so nutrient content can vary

WHAT MAKES BARLEY GREAT?

Nutrition

- 1/2 cup cooked pearled barley provides 176 Calories, 5 gm protein, 8 gm fiber, no fat, no cholesterol
- 1/2 cup cooked hulled barley provides 177 Calories, 7 gm protein, 9 gm fiber, 1 gm fat, no cholesterol

Barley has a low glycemic index making it a good grain choice for controlling blood sugars.

Vitamins

Barley is a rich source of B vitamins like niacin, thiamin, folate and B6. Niacin can also help to reduce cholesterol. The antioxidant selenium fights free radicals and oxidative stress. Antioxidants slows aging and reduce risk of disease.

Minerals

Barley is an excellent source of potassium which helps

moderate blood pressure. Magnesium is important for nerve function and energy production. Barley also has both calcium and phosphorus for strong bones.

Fiber

Barley contains both soluble and insoluble fiber. Beta-glucans is a type of soluble fiber known to lower cholesterol and maintain steady blood sugars. Insoluble fiber feeds friendly gut bacteria who, in turn, produce healthful compounds like short-chain fatty acids that maintain a healthy colon and assist with fat metabolism.

Fiber in barley helps with feelings of satiety, helping those trying to manage their weight or control Caloric intake.

BUYING AND USING BARLEY

Barley is most often found in grocery stores as pearled. Hulled barley can be found in health food stores or specialty grocers. Bulk grains should be maintained without evidence of moisture.

Store barley in a tightly covered glass container in a cool, dry place. Barley can also be stored in the refrigerator during periods of warmer weather.

Before using barley, rinse under running water and remove any dirt or debris that you may find. If using hulled barley, soak in cold water for 1-2 hours. Rinse and drain before cooking.

To cook, add one part barley to three and a half parts boiling water or broth. After the liquid has returned to a boil, turn down the heat, cover and simmer.



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Pearled barley cooks in about an hour. It is recommended to cook hulled barley for 90 minutes.

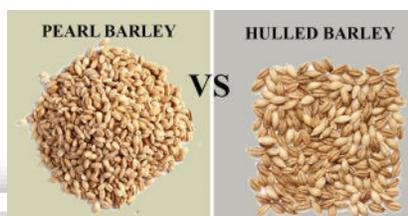
Ideas for using barley:

- Add barley to your favorite stews and soups to give them extra heartiness and flavor.
- Use cracked barley or barley flakes to make hot cereal.
- Toss chilled cooked hulled barley with chopped vegetables and dressing to make a tasty cold salad.
- Combine cooked barley and healthy sautéed mushrooms for a pilaf with an Eastern European twist.
- Mix barley flour with wheat flour to make breads and muffins that have a uniquely sweet and earthy taste.

CAUTIONS

Barley contains gluten which should be eliminated from the diets of those with celiac sprue, Celiac disease or gluten-sensitive enteropathies. Consuming gluten with these conditions can damage the intestinal lining and contribute to malabsorption.

However, in those who do not have these conditions, the gluten content of barley is well-tolerated.



Bean & Barley Soup

Thespruceeats.com

Barley Pesto Bowl

Yummly.com

Ingredients:

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| 1 c pearled barley, cooked | 2 large garlic cloves |
| 8 oz wild mushrooms, chopped | 1 Tbsp pine nuts |
| 2 sprigs fresh thyme | 1 tsp honey |
| 1 bunch beets with greens | 1 tsp orange zest |
| 1/2 c fresh basil leaves, packed | 1 tsp white wine vinegar |
| 1/4 c fresh parsley | Salt, pepper to taste |
| | 1/3 c olive oil, plus drizzles |

Directions:

1. Cook pearled barley according to instructions. Drain and set aside.
2. Wash and trim beets, setting greens aside. Place beet roots in center of a piece of aluminum foil and drizzle with olive oil, and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Gather foil around tops to form a packet with opening at the top. Place on cookie sheet and roast 50-60 minutes at 400°F until fork tender. When done, cook 10 min. Rub off skins and slice into cubes.
3. Remove beet stems and blanch beet greens for 30 seconds in boiling water. Transfer to ice bath. Drain and squeeze water out.
4. Toss chopped mushrooms with drizzled olive oil, fresh thyme and place on baking sheet. Roast 20-25 minutes, stirring once.
5. In blender of food processor, blend greens, basil, parsley, garlic, nuts, honey, orange zest, vinegar and salt/pepper. Pulse 3-4 time, then add olive oil and pulse to combine.
6. Toss cooked barley with 2/3 pesto mixture and top with beets, mushrooms and sprinkle of pine nuts if desired. Serve warm with remaining pesto on the side.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 large onion, diced
- 2-3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 ribs celery, diced
- 2 medium carrots, diced
- 1/2 other vegetables of choice like peas, corn, sweet potato
- 8 c water or broth
- 1 c pearled barley
- 1 c beans of choice (white, lima, kidney) cooked or canned
- 1/3 c tomato paste or diced tomatoes
- 1/2 tsp basil
- 1/2 tsp oregano
- 1/2 tsp thyme
- 2 large bay leaves
- Salt & pepper

Directions:

1. Sauté onions and garlic in a large pot 2-3 minutes. Add celery, carrots and other vegetables and cook another 3-5 minutes.
2. Add in broth or water and remaining ingredients and spices. Bring to boil then reduce heat to medium-low, cover and simmer 30 minutes to 1 hour, until barley is soft.
3. Remove bay leaves before serving.
4. Salt & pepper to taste.
5. Toss in raw spinach or other greens just before serving for added nutrition.

REFERENCES

Mayoclinic.org
Nutritiondata.self.com
Wholegrainscouncil.org