



THIS YEAR

EAT DELICIOUS
EAT HEALTHY

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Health & Home Care's

Way To Be Healthy

Try Adding Some of These Healthy Eating Tips To Your Daily Regimen

The Healthiest Carb You're Not Eating: Whole grain pasta is now tastier and better for you than ever. Here are four boxes worth buying.

I first heard about the importance of eating whole grains at an otherwise forgettable scientific conference nearly a decade ago. I was so blown away by the accumulating evidence of their protective effect against chronic disease that I made a beeline for the grocery store when I got home and purchased a box of the one brand of whole grain pasta I could find.

Now, I love pasta (and truth be told, all manners of starch). But the gummy, leaden mess that came out of this box had no right to carry such a noble name. Every bite began with paste and ended with grit. I dumped the whole pot and bemoaned my inevitable future of refined flour-induced ill health.

But a funny thing happened over the 10 years that followed: Food manufacturers started catching on to the benefits of whole grains. Dietitians have long known that they retain all the disease-fighting, health-promoting powerhouse nutrients (folate, vitamin E, magnesium, potassium, selenium, lignans, and phenolic compounds) that refining strips away. They also pack more fiber than do refined grains, and large studies have repeatedly shown how consuming enough fiber can help reduce your risk of heart disease and diabetes. If that doesn't wow you, try this: Eating



whole grains may even help you avoid weight gain. Sold!

Now that cereal, snack food, and tons of other product labels scream "Whole grains!" in all caps, I decided to take another look at the pasta aisle. My, how things have changed. I counted 11 different choices, and the Whole Grains Council, a trade group, tells me that sales of whole grain pasta increased 26 percent last year alone.

What I noticed first were the ingredient lists. I expected whole wheat but—lentils? Chickpeas? Flaxseed? Today's choices run the gamut between pure 100 percent whole wheat, which contains no refined flour, and grain blends, which don't always have as much fiber but make up for it with more pleasant textures and less assertive flavors. The latest blends combine various grain flours with seeds, legumes, and other ingredients to improve the texture while preserving nutrition. Some offer nutrients you aren't likely to find in traditional pasta, such as omega-3 fatty acids (thanks to flax). I tested the whole lot. The four listed below passed muster with my husband (one picky chef), my kids (two even pickier teens), and myself (the pickiest of all). Buon appetito.

- By Marge Perry, Prevention

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The Standout: Barilla Plus

A multigrain blend made with oat, spelt, barley, lentil and chickpea flours.
Contains flaxseed for added omega-3s.
Each serving satisfies nearly one-fifth of your daily value for protein.
Taste and texture is most like refined-flour pasta.
200 cal, 10 g pro, 38 g carb, 1 g fat, 0 g sat fat, 0 mg chol, 4 g fiber, 25 mg sodium*

Highest fiber: De Cecco Whole Wheat

10 percent whole wheat.
High in fiber, low in calories.
Fairly assertive wheat flavor that marries well with rich sauces.
180 cal, 8 g pro, 35 g carb, 1.5 g fat, 0 g sat fat, <5 mg chol, 7 g fiber, 0 mg sodium*

Tasty Blend: Ronzoni Healthy Harvest

Wheat flour blend with additional wheat bran and fiber.
Slightly chewier and nuttier in flavor than Barilla Plus.
Best served with robust sauces, such as marinara.
180 cal, 6 g pro, 42 g carb, 1 g fat, 0 g sat fat, 0 mg chol, 6 g fiber, 0 mg sodium*

Organic Pick: 365 Organic Everyday Value Whole Wheat

100 percent organic whole wheat flour; a heartier flavor than most blended brands.
Firm texture; nutty, slightly sweet taste; great with spicy sauces.
Available only at Whole Foods Markets.
210 cal, 7 g pro, 42 g carb, 1 g fat, 0 g sat fat, 0 mg chol, 5 g fiber, 0 g sodium*

*Nutrition info is per 2-ounce serving.

Spinach and Black Bean Pasta

"This is a very tasty and easy vegetarian pasta dish. It takes minimal time to prepare and has amazing flavor! It's also great served with brown rice!"



"A delicious tomato, spinach, and black bean sauce is served over whole wheat rotini pasta."

Prep Time: 15 Minutes

Cook Time: 30 Minutes Ready In: 45 Minutes

Servings: 8

Ingredients:

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| 1 (16 ounce) package whole wheat rotini pasta | 1 (15 ounce) can black beans, drained and rinsed |
| 1 1/2 cups vegetable broth | 1 cup frozen chopped broccoli |
| 2 1/2 cups chopped fresh spinach | 1 cup diced tomatoes |
| 1/2 cup chopped red onion | 2 ounces freshly grated Parmesan cheese |
| 1 clove garlic, chopped | |
| 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper salt and pepper to taste | |

Directions:

1. Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Add rotini, and cook for 8 to 10 minutes, or until al dente; drain.
2. In a large saucepan over medium heat, bring the vegetable broth to a boil. Reduce heat, and mix in spinach, onion, garlic, cayenne pepper, salt, and pepper. Stir in the black beans and broccoli. Continue to cook and stir 5 to 10 minutes.
3. Stir the tomatoes into the saucepan, and continue cooking 10 minutes, or until all vegetables are tender. Serve over the cooked pasta. Garnish with Parmesan cheese.

Recipe from allrecipes.com