



## Ancient Grains for Today's Tastes

You may have heard the term “ancient grains” and wondered just which grains are considered ancient. Though there’s no strict list of grains that qualify, generally the term refers to grains that have come down to us largely unchanged over centuries. Examples might include quinoa, amaranth, millet, teff, and wild rice, along with wheat varieties such as einkorn, emmer (farro), spelt and khorasan wheat (Kamut®).

**There are three good reasons to eat ancient grains:**

- 1. Good Taste.** Each different grain has its own particular taste and texture. When you change it up, you’ll discover new flavors that could become longtime favorites. Life is too short to eat the same thing day after day!
- 2. Better Health.** If your doctor asked you to eat more vegetables, you wouldn’t simply eat carrots (as healthy as they are!) – you would realize intuitively that different vegetables offer different nutrients your body needs. Same with grains. When you bring more diversity to your grain choices, your body gets a wider range of important nutrients.

Recent research, for instance, shows that Kamut® (right) has higher levels of certain minerals and antioxidants than modern wheat and increased ability to combat infection; black and red rice are also higher in antioxidants than brown rice.



- 3. Great Stories.** Eating food with a story behind it connects us to life on earth in meaningful ways. This is of course true when you “eat local” and connect with growers at your farmers market. It’s also true when your food comes from far away but arrives with a story. Quinoa comes to us from the high mountains of the Andes. Teff, with its tiny seeds, is used to make spongy injera bread in Ethiopia. Legend has it that Kamut® was discovered in an Egyptian tomb.

We eat to satisfy many needs, physical and emotional, and food with a story can be more satisfying all around – because of its human connections – than food created in a factory from unpronounceable ingredients.

**Which ancient grain is best?** Good health never comes from eating any one supposed “superfood,” but from eating a balanced diet of vegetables, legumes, whole grains, and fruits, with eggs, seafood and other healthy protein foods added to the mix.

This week, look around your supermarket and seek out a whole grain you’ve never tried – whether you think it qualifies as “ancient” or not. It’s a great time to discover what you’ve been missing out on.