Whole Grains in the Asian Diet

Today, many see white rice as an eternal centerpiece of Asian cuisine. But contrary to popular belief, whole grains hold a long culinary history in many of the most important staple dishes across Asia. Below is a snapshot of whole grain foods that have helped shape the diverse, delicious cuisines in a variety of Asian countries.

BLACK RICE

Black rice is sometimes known as "Forbidden Rice." Legend has it that during the Ming Dynasty, black rice was exclusively reserved for the Emperors to ensure their good health and long life.

Try black rice in the Chinese dish congee, which is like a thinner, brothier version of Italian risotto. Black rice is also well suited for rice pudding.

BROWN RICE

Brown rice was widespread before the late 1800s, when industrial milling made it cheap and easy to polish off the nutritious, colored bran of the grain. Note that whole grain rice is not just brown; it can also be red, black, or other hues.

Try brown rice in a stir fry. Since the grains don't clump together as much as white rice, you'll end up needing less oil.

CHAPATTI

Chapatti (Roti) is an unleavened flatbread popular in India. Made with whole wheat flour, water, and salt, it's like a whole grain cousin of naan.

Try chapatti as the starch alongside your next Indian curry dish or dhal, or choose roti instead of other flatbreads the next time you visit an Indian restaurant.

MILLET

Millet was the staple grain of Asia before rice, thousands of years ago. You can still find millet throughout China and India today.

Try making a breakfast porridge with millet instead of oatmeal, and top it with golden raisins or a banana.

SOBA

Soba noodles are made from buckwheat and are a traditional ingredient in Japanese cooking.

Try tossing cooked soba noodles with tofu, scallions, and a simple dressing of sesame oil and rice vinegar. Think of it as a Japanese version of pasta salad.

OLDWAYS
HEALTH THROUGH HERITAGE
ASIAN DIET PYRAMID
A contemporary approach to delicious, healthy eating

Drink Water & Tea

Less Often:
Meats and Sweets

Moderate amounts daily to weekly:
Eggs, poultry, healthy cooking oils, yoghurt

Often, at least twice per week:
Fish and Shellfish

Base every meal on these foods:
Vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts, seeds, soy foods, herbs and spices

Activity & Social Connection