TIP SHEET

Serve 100% Whole Grain Products

Harvest to Hallways

Incorporating 100% whole grain products takes thoughtful planning and taste-testing with students, but a few practical tips can help make 100% whole grains a regular part of your school meals and meet one of the goals of the USDA Pledge for Healthier School Meals.

Key Pledge Tips

Whole grains contain all parts of the grain seed or kernel—the bran, germ, and endosperm. Whole grains provide a variety of nutrients to support proper growth and development, including fiber! Foods that are 100% whole grain are different than "whole grain-rich" foods (which can be anywhere between 50–100% whole grain).

A food labeled 100% whole grain must list a whole grain ingredient first (or second if water is the first ingredient). Here is a list of whole grain ingredients:

- **100% Whole wheat**
- **Brown or wild rice**
- **Bulgur**
- **Corn masa, or nixtamalized corn tortillas**
- **Popcorn**
- **Hominy**
- **Sprouted grains**
- **Stoneground whole (name of grain)**
- **Quinoa**
- **Rolled oats or oatmeal**
- **White whole wheat flour**
- **Whole grain (name of grain)**

Simple Whole Grain Menu Ideas

Use USDA Foods for Schools to purchase whole grain ingredients such as rolled oats, white whole wheat flour, and whole grain tortillas for recipes. Try USDA Standardized Recipes from Child Nutrition Recipe Box that feature brown rice, quinoa, and whole wheat noodles:

- Bean Tostada
- Berry Oat Bake
- Fiesta Wrap
- Beef and Chimichurri Rice Bowl
- Quinoa Bowl
- Yellow Rice Pilaf (Pilaf Method)

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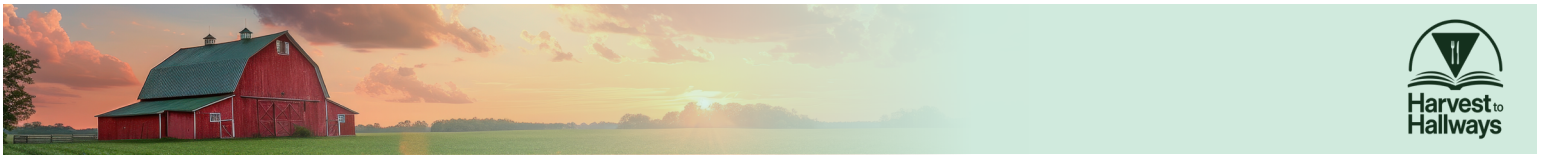

School Spotlights

The Harvest to Hallways initiative is at the heart of the Healthy Meals Incentives Initiative's (HMI) School Food System Transformation Challenge (SFST), driving efforts to bring nutritious, locally sourced foods into schools. Schools participating in the SFST challenge are partnering with regional food hubs and local vendors to bring 100% whole grains to students—from sprouted-grain breakfast options to locally made breads and tortillas.

- Two school districts, Holmen and Mount Horeb, in Wisconsin worked with rural farmers, producers, and a local tortilleria to develop a new tortilla that uses locally grown and milled grains.
- Anchorage School District in Alaska sourced local 100% whole grain barley couscous and barley flour to use in scratch-made salads and pizzas.
- Lodi School District in California is the site of a program piloting the use of sprouted whole grain products in schools.

Try It Out!

Try these activities as a quick way to add 100% whole grains to your menu:

1. **Swap Challenge:** Substitute whole wheat flour or whole grain sorghum flour for enriched flour in scratch-made recipes or replace a dinner roll for a whole grain dinner roll.
2. **Harvest to Hallways:** Offer locally grown grains, when available, such as oatmeal or whole grain grits at breakfast with customizable toppings such as fresh fruit, cinnamon, crunchy sunflower seeds, or savory cheese.
3. **Taste Test 'Try Day' Event:** Build-your-own grain bowl using brown rice, bulgur, quinoa, whole grain pasta, or whole grain grits alongside student's favorite vegetables, sauces, and proteins.
4. **Reflection Prompt:** Imagine using your school meals as a way to make a positive change: What innovative way can you include local food traditions or spark student curiosity about nutrition when adding 100% whole grains to your menu?

Helpful Tools

- Child Nutrition Recipe Box
- Eat Real Food Toolkit
- USDA Foods Database
- Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs
- Tips for Procuring Whole Foods
- Taste-Testing Event Resources
- Whole Grains Make a Difference
- Crediting Grains in Child Nutrition Programs Tip Sheets
- The Whole Grain Resource for the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs

Serving 100% whole grains is a great way to support healthier school meals and meet USDA standards. Use the resources above, check ingredient lists, and don't hesitate to try new recipes!

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