



## *Whole-Wheat Berries*

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Wheat berries can be made from whole-wheat kernels or cracked wheat and can be used to replace rice in most dishes; they can also be substituted for mashed potatoes. These kernels need soaking or steam cooking to become tender. When cooked, they have a sweet, nut-like flavor and a slightly chewy texture. There are many ways to prepare dishes with wheat berries, and many ways haven't been discovered yet - so experiment!

The versatility of wheat berries is demonstrated in recipes from cereals to breads, to casserole and to stuffing for fowl. Wheat berries can be prepared ahead of need and the ready-to-use cooked wheat may be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for about 1 week.

Wheat berries are probably the easiest whole-wheat food to prepare, and certainly ranks as one of the most versatile foods in use. None of the measurements are critical, and there's no fussing with stirring, continual watching, etc.

### **How To Make Wheat Berries**

**Stove-top method:** In a pot with a fairly tight lid, combine 3 cups of water, and 1 cup of whole-wheat kernels. Bring to a boil. Allow to simmer ½ hour. Turn off the heat and allow the wheat to stand 8-12 hours, or until soft and plump. Drain any remaining liquid. Use or store in refrigerator, tightly covered, for no more than one week.

**Thermos cooked:** Put wheat and 2½ cups boiling water in a quart-sized thermos. Screw the top lightly and leave overnight.

**Slow cooker method:** Simmer ingredients on high for approximately 2-3 hours. Turn off the slow cooker and let sit for a few hours or until soft and plump.

To freeze cooked wheat, place cooked wheat in a thin layer on cookie sheet. Partially freeze, then place in freezer bags and store in freezer. Freezing it in this manner will allow you to remove the amount desired for use without thawing the entire container.

Wheat berries can be added in small amounts to a variety of foods, including: meat loaf, chili, soups, stews, casseroles, salads, stroganoff, rice dishes, scrambled eggs, chicken enchiladas, shepherd's pie, fried rice, stir fry, and many other dishes. It is also a great meat-extender in recipes that call for ground meats.

Adapted from: Food Storage Cooking School, by R. Low and D. Hendricks, Utah State University Extension, 1/99.  
 Full book available at this website: [http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/FN\\_503.pdf](http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/FN_503.pdf)