

# Your Guide To Starches

They're the backbone of a healthy, sustainable diet for energy, satiety and overall health — when you choose them in their whole-food forms.

## Grains (whole or minimally processed)

- Brown rice
- White rice (less fiber, but still a starch)
- Wild rice
- Oats (steel-cut, rolled, groats, etc; avoid highly processed instant types)
- Barley
- Millet
- Quinoa (technically a pseudograin but starchy)
- Farro
- Bulgur
- Buckwheat (also a pseudograin)
- Amaranth
- Teff
- Sorghum
- Rye berries
- Wheat berries
- Corn (whole kernels, polenta, grits)

## Starchy vegetables

- Potatoes (all kinds: russet, red, yellow, fingerling, etc.)
- Sweet potatoes
- Yams
- Winter squashes (butternut, kabocha, acorn, etc.)
- Cassava (yuca)
- Taro
- Plantains
- Green peas
- Corn on the cob

## Key points

- Choose **whole, intact starches** whenever possible (e.g., whole potatoes rather than fries, whole brown rice rather than white rice when you want more fiber).
- Starches are *complex carbohydrates* — they digest more slowly than simple sugars and provide longer-lasting energy.
- Don't fear them: they're the foundation of traditional healthy diets worldwide (think Okinawa sweet potatoes, Andean potatoes, African yams, Asian rice, Mediterranean barley).

**Quick tip:** If you're planning meals or helping others, focus on a variety of these starches throughout the week. Rotate grains, tubers & legumes - you'll cover different nutrients & keep things interesting.

## Legumes (beans and peas)

While they're also rich in protein and fiber, legumes are starch-dominant:

- Lentils (all types: green, brown, red)
- Chickpeas (garbanzo beans)
- Black beans
- Kidney beans
- Pinto beans
- Navy beans
- White beans (cannellini, Great Northern)
- Adzuki beans
- Lima beans
- Mung beans
- Soybeans (edamame is less starchy but still some)
- Split peas

## Other starchy plant foods

- Chestnuts (unique among nuts — high starch, low fat)
- Lotus root
- Water chestnuts

## Foods (mostly starch, but often processed)

- Whole-grain breads and pastas (still starch-based but often higher in calorie density and easier to overeat)
- Whole-grain tortillas
- Whole-grain noodles (soba, udon, etc.)