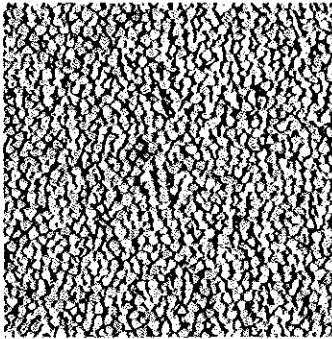


Bulgur Wheat and Nutrition

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Bulgur Wheat and Nutrition

Overview

Bulgur wheat, traditionally an ingredient in Middle Eastern cuisine, consists of steamed and crushed wheat kernels. The grains are cracked, but do not mistake bulgur wheat for cracked wheat. This chewy grain used in grain and vegetable salads imparts a nutty taste along with good nutritional value, including folic acid and iron.

Calories and Fat

A 1-cup serving of cooked bulgur wheat contains 151.1 calories. Based on a 2,000-calories diet, this accounts for 7.5 percent of the calories you may include in your meal plan. As bulgur wheat is typically not eaten plain, be sure to adjust your total calories accordingly. Bulgur wheat is low in fat, containing less than 1 g. Limit your fat intake every day to 20 to 35 percent of your total calories.

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Protein and Carbohydrates

Most of the calories -- 89 percent -- in a serving of cooked bulgur wheat come from carbohydrates. A 1-cup serving contains 33.8 g. The complex carbohydrates in bulgur wheat slowly digest in your body, keeping your energy levels high over a long period of time. The Institute of Medicine suggests including 130 g of carbohydrates in your diet each day, as well as 46 to 56 g of protein. One serving of bulgur wheat provides 5.6 g of protein, contributing to this nutritional goal. The Harvard School of Public Health notes that whole grains, like bulgur wheat, are an excellent source of protein due to their high nutritional value.

Fiber

The fiber in your diet helps maintain your digestive tract and helps decrease your risk of developing constipation. It also plays a role in controlling your blood sugar and cholesterol levels and it may help prevent colorectal cancer. Bulgur wheat is a good choice for boosting your fiber levels -- each 1-cup serving contains 8.2 g of fiber. Include 25 to 38 g of fiber in your daily diet to reap the health benefits of this nutrient.

Vitamins

A 1-cup serving of bulgur wheat provides 9.1 percent of the daily recommended intake of vitamin B3. Also known as niacin, this vitamin influences the adrenal glands, helping them produce a range of sex and stress hormones. It also improves your circulation and helps decrease blood cholesterol. A niacin deficiency may have mild to severe symptoms, including fatigue, vomiting, depression, diarrhea and mental problems. A portion of bulgur wheat also contains 8.2 percent of the folate your body requires each day. Folate is particularly important if you or your partner is pregnant because it can help ward off birth defects.

Minerals

While you do not need much manganese in your daily diet, not consuming enough may result in fertility problems, weakness and seizures. A 1-cup serving of bulgur wheat provides more than half the daily recommended value of this mineral. Manganese helps your body metabolize fat and carbohydrates, absorb calcium and regulate your blood sugar. You'll also get a boost of iron from consuming a serving of bulgur wheat -- 1 cup contains 9.7 percent of the iron you need daily.

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