



Texas Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Division

Tips to Prepare Whole Grain-Rich Items

GENERAL INFORMATION

Whole grains contain all three layers of the grain kernel (the bran, germ and endosperm), whereas refined white grains are milled to remove part or all of the bran and germ. Whole grains cook differently than refined grains. This resource addresses common challenges associated with whole grain products and offers strategies to enhance their visual appeal and taste.

CHALLENGE

STRATEGIES

Darker color of whole grain-rich products	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pair darker whole grains with colorful fruits (ex: pancakes with blueberries and strawberries) and vegetables (ex: Fiesta rice)• Prepare as part of a popular mixed dish (ex: Santa Fe chicken wrap)• Create inventive and descriptive names to generate student interest• Use verbal prompts to promote whole grain items on the service line
Overcooked (May result in chewy, tough, mushy, lumpy, dry or sticky textures)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use recipes written specifically for whole grains• Cooked grains continue to cook as they are held hot prior to service. Always cook grains al dente and be mindful of how long grains are held hot or on the service line. Batch cook to reduce holding times.
Undercooked (May result in crunchy, hard, rubbery or gummy textures)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use recipes written specifically for whole grains• Increase cook times• Increase amount of liquid (water or stock) when cooking

SPOTLIGHT ON RESOURCES

[USDA Fact Sheets](#)

[Whole Grain Best Practices](#)

(from Team Nutrition)

[National Food Service Management Institute](#)

