



# Buckwheat

## Did You Know?

Buckwheat is a naturally gluten-free food, therefore a healthful substitute for those who do not tolerate wheat.



Photos by:  
[http://www.flickr.com/photos/ervins\\_strauhmanis/9548721480/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/ervins_strauhmanis/9548721480/)  
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/premshree/8580355275/>

Despite its name, buckwheat is not actually related to wheat. It is a “pseudo-cereal,” meaning it is technically not a cereal grain, but is nutritionally very similar. Buckwheat has a long blooming season, and produces fragrant flowers. These flowers attract bees, and the nectar is used to produce a dark, distinctive honey.

## Why buckwheat?

- Buckwheat is a good source of high quality protein, soluble fiber, copper, and magnesium.
- Like other whole grains, it may help control cholesterol, blood pressure, blood sugar, and reduce risk for heart disease.
- Compounds in buckwheat called “flavonoids” contain anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer properties.
- ½ cup cooked buckwheat provides about 77 calories, 3 grams of protein, and 2 grams of fiber.

## Varieties

“Common” buckwheat is the variety most widely available, but it can be found in an array of forms:

- Buckwheat groats –hulled, whole grain buckwheat is great for making hot cereal, hearty soups, or even salads.
- Kasha – roasted buckwheat groats, often used as a hot cereal.
- Buckwheat flour – can be added to traditional baked goods like pancakes or breads, or used as an ingredient in gluten-free baking.
- Soba noodles – traditional Japanese noodles made of buckwheat flour, can be used in both hot and cold dishes.

## Helpful Tip

- Unless you are making hot cereal, coating groats with an egg or oil before adding water can dramatically improve texture!