



Grains of truth about **COMMERCIAL BREADS**

Definitions

Bread, often called the staff of life, differs greatly in size, shape, texture, appearance, and flavor. Yeast breads come in a variety of shapes, including flatbreads such as pita or focaccia, buns, rolls and loaves in the form of hearth or pan breads.

Pan breads: These can be made from enriched white flour, whole wheat, or a combination of flours. They are baked in loaf pans for a softer crust. Pan breads may include coarse-textured home-style, richer premium, and buttery split-top breads.

Hearth breads: Baked directly on the hearth for crispier crusts, some white hearth breads include French, Italian and Vienna bread. Whole grain varieties include wheat, rye and pumpernickel are popular as well.

Whole wheat bread: This bread is made entirely from whole grain wheat flour, which contains all the components of the wheat kernel—the germ, bran and endosperm. Label will read 100% Whole Wheat.

“Wheat” bread: Not to be misconstrued with whole wheat bread, this type usually contains a mixture of about 75 percent of white flour and 25 percent whole wheat flour.

Mixed grain breads: Other grain or vegetable flours, such as rye, oat, triticale, buckwheat, amaranth, potato, alfalfa, soy and barley, are used in addition to wheat.

Variety breads: In today’s market, you can purchase nearly any variety of flavors and seasoned breads from the sweet fruity and nutty flavors to the savory and spicy.

History

Around 10,000 B.C. man first started eating a crude form of flat bread—a baked combination of flour and water. Ancient Egyptians are usually credited with inventing the oven and discovering yeast leavening. About 3,000 B.C. they started fermenting flour and water mixtures by using wild, air-borne yeast.

Eventually they added sugar, salt and flavorings such as poppy and sesame seeds.

Nutritional value

All breads are nutritious—some more so than others. The 2005 edition of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends enjoying five to ten ounces daily of bread, cereal, rice and pasta (depending on age, gender and activity level) – with half coming from whole grains. They are a major source of complex carbohydrates (starches), fiber, iron and B vitamins and are generally low in fat.



Keep in mind that serving sizes are equal to one-ounce and therefore relatively small. One slice of bread weighing one-ounce is a serving, so a sandwich would provide two servings.



Grain Group
Make half your grains whole

The dietary guideline also recommends at least 45 to 65 percent of daily calories come from carbohydrates, 20 to 35 percent from fat and 10 to 35 percent from protein.

White bread: To compare, one slice of enriched white bread gets 76 percent of its calories from carbohydrates (mostly complex) and only 11 percent from fat. The rest, 13 percent, is from protein.

Enriched white bread is also a good source of the four major B vitamins—thiamin, riboflavin, niacin and folic acid. Since 1941, white flour in the United States has been “enriched” with three major B vitamins and iron in amounts equal to whole wheat flour. As of January 1, 1998, a new fortification law went into effect requiring enriched grain products to contain specific levels of folic acid. One slice of white bread contains almost a gram of iron and now 37 micrograms of folic acid. Compare this amount to the 9.8 micrograms before the enrichment of folic acid became effective.

White bread has .5 gram of soluble fiber per slice, which contributes to daily fiber needs of 25 to 38 grams. When eaten as part of a low-fat diet, soluble fiber has been shown to help lower blood cholesterol.

Whole wheat bread: The nutritional content of whole wheat breads also varies between brands. An average slice of whole wheat bread gets 69 percent of its calories from carbohydrates and 15 percent from fat because the wheat germ in the whole wheat flour is about 10 percent fat. That leaves 16 percent contributed by protein. The wheat germ contains protein in addition to fat and several minerals.

However, the nutrient profile of whole wheat bread remains excellent. It has two grams of fiber, primarily insoluble. Foods containing insoluble fiber have been shown to help prevent colon cancer and possibly breast cancer. Almost a gram of iron per slice, a substantial amount of folic acid (17.5 micrograms), vitamin E, copper, vitamin B₆ and the three major B vitamins make it a nutrient dense food.

Wheat bread, mixed grain or variety breads: All of these vary slightly in nutritional value. Be sure to read the label.

The National Center for Nutrition and Dietetics of the American Dietetic Association and now the US Dietary Guidelines recommend that Americans eat at **least** three servings of whole grain foods daily. The label should list first “**whole wheat flour**” or contain a combination of whole grain ingredients for it to be a whole grain food. When shopping for whole grain bread, remember that not all brown based bread is whole wheat. A brown color may be the effect of caramel coloring, which will be listed on the label. Its nutrient value is similar to white bread.

Labeling

Read labels. These are your best source of nutrition and ingredient information. The Federal Nutrition Labeling and Education Act (NLEA) of 1990 standardized nutrition labels.

Revised 2007

To alleviate consumer confusion, only certain terms—which have very strict definitions under the NLEA—may be used on a product. The core terms are “free,” “low,” “low-fat,” “low calorie,” “high,” “good source,” “reduced,” “less,” “more,” “light,” and “healthy.”

Fourteen nutritional claims may be made regarding a nutrient or a food and its effect on the risk of a disease or health-related condition. Those claims of risk-reduction that apply to breads define fiber-containing grain products and their relationship to the risk of heart disease and cancer, whole grains and their relationship to the risk of heart disease and cancer; folate and its relationship to neural tube defects.

The list of mandatory nutrients which must be on the label includes: total calories, calories from fat, total fat, saturated fat, trans-fat, cholesterol, sodium, total carbohydrates, dietary fiber, sugars, protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, iron and folic acid. Thiamin, riboflavin and niacin are not required because deficiencies of these are no longer prevalent due to the enrichment of white flour.

Storage

Breads begin to stale once removed from the oven. Keep pan breads tightly wrapped and store at room temperature. Refrigerator storage has a tendency to stale bread quickly. Refrigerate only those breads that have a custard or meat filling. Crusty breads should be stored in paper bags that breathe. To freeze, wrap in air-tight, freezer-suitable packaging. Freeze and hold breads and rolls at 0°F up to three to six months. Commercially baked breads may be frozen in their own wrappings if they are used in one or two weeks.

Thaw frozen bread at room temperature. Microwave thawing is not recommended because bread may dry out and become over-heated, which results in toughening.



Wheat Foods

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