

Ancient Grains vs. Modern Wheat: What's the Difference?

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By now you've probably heard the term "ancient grains." It's been a popular buzz phrase in the healthy food world for a few years now, and it's popularity is only increasing. Even [Cherrios is jumping on the bandwagon](#).

But does anyone actually know what an ancient grain is? It sounds a little mystic, right?

It's actual quite simple.

"Ancients grains" is a term for grains that have been planted and cultivated the same way for thousands of years with no manipulation by modern man. Some, like spelt, contain gluten, others, like quinoa, do not.



The difference between these so-called ancient grains and the typical "modern wheat" found in your average grocery store is that most grains today come from a variety of wheat created in the 1960's through cross-breeding and genetic manipulation.

The goal: to produce a higher-yielding and lower cost crop.

In addition to this genetic tampering, the bleaching, stripping and processing that modern wheat is subjected to during bread-making, results in a very unnatural product.

It's not “GMO” per say, but it's much different than the grains our ancestors were eating 75,000 years ago.



So what's the problem with all this?

Well, unless you've been living under a rock, you've probably also heard that *a lot* of people are having trouble with wheat lately — and not just those with Celiac's disease.

Symptoms like fatigue, headaches, abdominal pain, bloating, and many others similar to those experienced by Celiac patients, have been attributed to the consumption of wheat products.

Many people blame it on gluten, the protein in wheat, but others recognize that there might be a more elusive culprit.

Something else — something no one can quite put their finger on. Hence, speculation that the widespread complaints of gluten intolerance and wheat sensitivity may be attributable to the bastardization of wheat, and not to the macronutrient gluten.

Those who recognize this are behind the ancient grains revolution.

Ancient grains are not only “more natural,” they also tend to be higher in fiber, protein, vitamins and minerals than modern wheat. Research shows that some varieties have even been found to have better oxidative protection (protection against cancer-causing free radicals) and be easier for those with wheat sensitivities to handle.

People like Bob Quinn, the man behind the brand Kamut®, are leading the pack in a return to a simpler form of grains.



Quinn discovered the “ancient grain” khorasan wheat at a fair in his hometown and began growing it on his father’s farm in Montana back in the 70’s. The family later [trademarked the grain as Kamut®](#), but do not charge companies to use their label. They simply want to make sure that anyone using the grain abides by certain principals set for it.

All Kamut® must be non-GMO, organically grown, free of any contamination from modern wheat, and not mixed with any modern wheat in pasta. Basically, they’re making it easy for the consumer to identify a quality, *natural* product.

So aside from buying Kamut®, what else can you do as an informed customer to make sure you’re getting wheat that hasn’t been messed with?

You can buy products made purely with the generally recognized forms of ancient grains. These include: Farro, Spelt, Quinoa, Amaranth, Chia, Sorghum, Freekeh, Teff, Millet and Eikorn. In addition, make sure you’re buying them in their whole grain, unprocessed, or sprouted from.

A good option for bread is [Food For Life’s Genesis 1:29](#). It has practically everything on that list!

If you’re interested in trying Kamut®, you could actually win it in my [“Best of Expo West” Giveaway](#). There’s still time to enter before we pick the winner on Sunday.

And be sure to check back on Monday when I’ll have an incredible Wheat Berry, Butternut Squash + Kale Salad recipe made with ancient grains to share with you.



It's insanely good and you're not going to want to miss it.

*This post is NOT sponsored. I'm just incredibly interested in ancient grains and I hope after reading this, you are too!

Weigh In: Have you heard of ancient grains? What's your favorite ancient grain? Are you concerned about modern wheat?

xo Whitney