

# Feel the pulse



*It was not that long ago that the now widely available cous cous was turning culinary heads. Last year it was quinoa's turn to make its mark on foodservice as celebrity chefs, nutritionists and foodies shouted its praises loud and long, turning the once humble ingredient from the Andes into a popular superfood. Clive Moxham, sales and marketing director at Leathams Ltd, believes that the penetration of grains into the mainstream is a growing phenomenon and – with the growing demand for natural foods – predicts that ancient grains, pulses and alternative variants of rice will soon become one of the hottest culinary categories in foodservice*

**It is widely accepted that the popularity of grains and pulses in all market sectors will continue to grow throughout 2013 and, if you look at the recent results polled in the National Restaurant Association's 2012 'What's Hot?' Chef Survey, this is particularly true in foodservice. The findings of the survey suggest that Camargue red rice, quinoa, black rice and freekeh are set to make their mark this year, as consumers want more of them on the menus.**

The good news for chefs and caterers is that the range of grains readily available in the marketplace has grown exponentially in the last several years. What's more, grains today represent nearly every colour in the rainbow, from charcoal wheat and red quinoa to black and purple barley, helping plate presentation and enhancing product appeal. No longer must every risotto or seafood paella begin with traditional white rice, these grains can turn some old traditional favourites into new, interesting and possibly even more nutritious meals.

## **A whole lot of choice**

Whole grains contain all the essential parts and naturally occurring nutrients of the entire grain seed, including the bran, germ and endosperm. The best examples of these are amaranth, black barley, buckwheat, quinoa (white, black and red) and coloured rice, including several black and red varieties. Also certain varieties of wheat – including spelt, einkorn, emmer, farro, grano, kamut, charcoal wheat – and other forms of the grain such as bulgur, cracked wheat and wheatberries are enjoying resurgence in interest among foodservice operators.

## **A healthy and natural option**

While today's consumers are knowledgeable about the health benefits of fruits and vegetables, many people are still unaware that whole grains can often be an even better source of key vitamins such as B vitamins, vitamin E, magnesium, iron, fibre and minerals. Additionally, whole grains have some valuable antioxidants and protein.

## **Grains explained**

Although the term grain is often used as an umbrella term, these foods actually fall into a range of different categories depending both on the way they are grown and the plant family to which they belong.

## **Pulses, lentils and legumes**

Pulses, lentils and legumes are the ripe edible seeds that come from a variety of pod-bearing leguminous plants. Examples of these are lentils, chickpeas and kidney beans.

## **Grains**

Grains are divided into two groups, whole grains and refined grains. Refined grains give us flour, white bread and white rice. A whole grain – such as amaranth and bulgur wheat – contains 100% of the original kernel.

## **Cereals**

Cereals are the seeds from plants that come from the grass family. Examples are barley and oats. Polenta is considered to be a cereal, as it is made from the crushed kernels of corn.

*With an annual turnover of more than £65m, Leathams Ltd, which was started in 1980 by brothers Mark and Oliver Leatham, offers a wide range of innovative foods such as ready-to-eat pulses and grains, IQF cheeses and quality Italian meats to independent foodservice customers, pizza and sandwich chains, wholesalers and grocery retailers.*  
[www.leathams.co.uk](http://www.leathams.co.uk)

## Amaranth

Once a staple in the diets of pre-Columbian Aztecs, amaranth can be simmered like other grains and has a porridge-like texture.

It is a relative of beetroots, Swiss chard and spinach, and for this reason, some of its nutritional characteristics are more like these dark green, leafy vegetables than the cereal grain foods. Amaranth can be combined with other grains if you desire a more rice-like dish, or it can be popped in a skillet like popcorn.



**Flavour:** nutty with a crunchy texture

## Black & purple barley

A staple in the Ethiopian diet, the shape of this hearty grain resembles a coffee bean and cooks up to a glossy purplish-mahogany colour. It has a unique nutty flavour and chewy texture, which makes it a great choice for a nut substitution. It enhances the colour and texture of stir fries, soups and salads.



**Flavour:** Earthy mixed with a light crunchy berry texture

## Buckwheat

Buckwheat is a cereal grain that is related to rhubarb and sorrel. It is this relationship that makes it an excellent substitute for people who are sensitive to wheat or other grains that contain protein glutens.

Buckwheat can be served as an alternative to rice, made into porridge, cold grain salads and hot grain casseroles.



**Flavour:** very intense and ranges from nutty to earthy

## Bulgur wheat

Bulgur is a quick-cooking form of whole wheat that has been cleaned, parboiled, dried, ground into particles and sifted into distinct sizes. Bulgur holds a place in recipes similar to rice or cous cous, but with a higher nutritional value. Best known as an ingredient in tabouli salad, bulgur is also a tasty, low-fat ingredient in pilaf, soup, bakery goods, stuffing or casseroles.



**Flavour:** Deep and nutty

## Camargue red rice

Cultivated in the wetlands of the Camargue region of southern France, this short-grained, unmilled variety of rice is quite sticky and has a brownish-red colour. Full of essential fibres and antioxidants it is best cooked in the same style as risotto rice and works well with salads, casseroles and soups.



**Flavour:** Intense and nutty taste with a naturally chewy texture

## Charcoal wheat

'Charcoal' describes the unique, smoky colour of this ancient wheat, which, when cooked, takes on a vibrant bronze hue. Its versatility makes it ideal for a wealth of applications, from grain and leafy salads to pilafs, soups and hearty chilli con carne. Charcoal wheat contributes both body and texture while absorbing flavours well to create tasty signature sides to any centre-of-plate protein or vegetable.



**Flavour:** Rich and nutty taste

## Farro

The exact definition of farro has caused confusion for many a year. Fundamentally farro is a whole grain, however the grains that comprise farro come from a variety of wheat species. Having said that, farro is often known as 'spelt' – the source of which is a single wheat species. Regardless of the name, farro provides a wealth of nutritional benefits and works well in soups and salads. In addition, farro flour can be used to make pasta.



**Flavour:** A nutty, slightly sweet, pleasingly chewy grain

## Freekeh

Freekeh is a cereal food made from green wheat that goes through a roasting process. The wheat is harvested while the grains are still young and green, when the seeds are soft and moisture-dense; it is then piled and sun-dried. Next, the piles are set on fire and burned. Finally, the kernels are thrashed or rubbed to make their flavour, texture and colour uniform. Freekeh has several nutritional attributes and can be classified as a superfood as it is high in protein and fibre, consisting mostly of insoluble fibre.



**Flavour:** Unique smoky aroma and a nutty, toasted taste





## Tabbouleh Prawn Salad

**SERVES 4**

### INGREDIENTS

- 150g bulgur wheat
- 600ml boiling water
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 4 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 cucumber, peeled and chopped
- 1 bunch spring onions, chopped
- Handful fresh parsley, chopped
- Handful chopped fresh mint leaves
- 1 tbsp ground coriander
- 1 tbsp minced fresh root ginger
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 10 large cooked prawns, peeled and deveined

### METHOD

1. Place bulgur wheat in a large bowl, and pour the boiling water and olive oil over it. Stir, cover, and let stand for 15 to 20 minutes.
2. When all of the water has been absorbed and the bulgur is tender, stir in the lemon juice, cucumber, spring onions, parsley and mint. Season with coriander, ginger, salt and pepper. Garnish with prawns.



## Red and White Quinoa Salad with Pitta Bread

**SERVES 4**

### INGREDIENTS

- 100g red quinoa, dry weight
- 100g white quinoa, dry weight
- 185g tin of tuna in spring water
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 12 black olives, optional
- 2 very ripe tomatoes
- Half a cucumber
- 4 heaped tbsp basil, mint or parsley
- 4 pitta bread

### METHOD

1. Cook quinoa in boiling salted water until tender (15-20 minutes).
2. Stir in the lemon juice and olive oil. Season lightly with salt and pepper and then leave the quinoa to sit while you prepare the other ingredients.
3. Remove the little black cores from the tomatoes and then chop them into 1cm chunks.
4. Cut the cucumber in half lengthways. Use a teaspoon to scoop out and discard the seeds. Chop the flesh into 1cm chunks.
5. Cut the olives in half. Slice the basil. Add both to the quinoa.
6. Stir the tuna and its juice into the quinoa followed by the rest of the ingredients. Season to taste.
7. Warm the pitta bread and serve the salad in or alongside it. You could also serve this without the pitta as a lovely salad or wrap it up in tortillas.

## Camargue Red Rice Cakes with Mixed Leaf Salad

**SERVES: 4**

### INGREDIENTS

- 375g Camargue red rice
- 2 tbsp garlic-infused olive oil
- 250g minced white fish, chicken, turkey, or grated cheddar cheese
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 tsp 5-spice powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp hot chilli sauce
- 2 tbsp hoisin sauce
- 2 tbsp tomato ketchup
- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- 2 tbsp ginger wine, or medium sherry
- 1 crisp cos lettuce, shredded
- 1 little gem lettuce, shredded
- 50g rocket, shredded
- 50g watercress, shredded



### METHOD

1. Cook the rice for 30 minutes, drain and set aside.
2. Combine half the cooked rice, the mince or cheese, egg, spice, salt and chilli sauce. Mix well using a food processor or in a bowl with a wooden spoon.
3. Compact the mixture well and shape it into 16 small burger-shaped cakes.
4. Heat the garlic-infused oil until hot. Cook the rice cakes for 2-3 minutes each side or until crusty and cooked right through.
5. Combine the sauce ingredients and stir together. Mix the leaves and divide between four serving plates and add some cooked rice.
6. Set 4 hot rice cakes on each plate and drizzle with sauce to serve.



## International Year of the Quinoa

The year 2013 has been declared by the UN as 'The International Year of the Quinoa', recognising the indigenous Andean peoples who have maintained, controlled, protected and preserved quinoa as one of the planet's superfoods for generations.

Quinoa is justifiably classed as a superfood because it is one of the only plant foods to provide a complete protein as well as offering all the essential amino acids, iron, magnesium, calcium, vitamin B, Omega 3 and fibre – what's more, it is gluten free. Also known as goosefoot because of the shape of the grain before it is cooked, it is a relative of beetroot, chard and spinach, and the leaves can also be eaten as well as the grain. It is extremely versatile and cooks can choose from either red, white or black quinoa or combine them together for a great visual mix.



**Flavour:** Quinoa has a subtle nutty taste that marries well in soups, salads and casseroles

## Spiced Sweet & Sour Quinoa Salad with Prawns and Peppers

### INGREDIENTS

2 x 250g pouches ready-to-eat red and white quinoa  
 2 red peppers  
 3 tbsp honey  
 6 tbsp water  
 100g currants  
 120g ready-to-eat dried apricots, chopped into small chunks  
 1 heaped tbsp freshly grated ginger  
 1 tsp ground cumin  
 1 tsp ground paprika  
 1 tsp turmeric  
 Grated zest and juice (about 10 tbsp) of 2 oranges  
 Grated zest and juice (4-5 tbsp) of 1.5 lemons  
 4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil  
 1 tsp vegetable oil  
 20 large or 28 small raw tiger prawns, patted dry with absorbent kitchen paper  
 8 tbsp sliced basil and 2 tbsp small leaves to garnish  
 Salt

### METHOD

1. Cut the peppers in half, remove and discard the seeds. Cut the peppers into 3cm chunks, triangles look good. Add the peppers, honey and water to a medium-sized shallow pan. Cover the pan and sweat the peppers over a medium heat for 12-14 minutes until they are soft and their



cooking juices are syrupy. If the peppers start to dry out as they sweat, add more water, 1 tbsp at a time.

2. While the peppers sweat, tip the quinoa into a shallow bowl that will fit in your microwave. Add the currants, dried apricots, grated ginger, cumin, paprika and turmeric. Stir in the extra virgin olive oil and the citrus zest and juice.
3. Once the peppers are soft, heat the quinoa mixture in the microwave on high for 2 minutes. While it heats, get a large frying pan, add the vegetable oil and get it very hot. Add the prawns, fry for 1 minute. Turn the prawns and fry for 20 seconds. Drain the fat, then add peppers and their cooking juices. Toss together. Take the pan off the heat.
4. Add the sliced basil to the quinoa, season to taste. Spread it onto a large serving dish. Spoon the prawns, peppers and their cooking juices over the top. Sprinkle the basil leaves over everything then serve.

*The spiced quinoa is also excellent served with roast sweet potatoes or pan-fried strips of pork.*

## Rise to the occasion during National Real Bread Maker Week

11-17 May 2013

While the country has recently gone baking mad due to a proliferation of TV programmes on the subject, countless new recipe books and most magazines and national newspapers including baking ideas, you might be forgiven for thinking that baking is a new trend. The truth is, of course, that baking has been providing us with the staff of life for millennia, however over the last half century, the vast majority of bread consumed in this country is not perceived as 'real' by 'real bread' aficionados.

Real bread came under threat in the early 1960s when scientists at the Chorleywood Flour Milling and Bakery Research Association laboratories came up with a new way of producing bread that made it softer, reduced its cost and more than doubled its shelf life. The

so-called Chorleywood method of baking – which requires extra yeast and added fats to succeed – is now used to make 80% of the bread consumed in the UK, most of which also includes a cocktail of chemicals to improve shelf life even further.

Real bread campaigners are urging us to turn our backs on Chorleywood bread in favour of the healthier, tastier, simpler version of our forefathers.

For further information and to find out where you can buy real bread near you, visit [www.](http://www.realbreadcampaign.org)

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