

Barley Bits

Fresh ideas for cool summer dining

National Barley
Foods Council

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Barley Nicoise

A perfect luncheon entrée

- 1 cup pearl barley
- 3 cups water
- 1/2 cup prepared vinaigrette dressing, divided
- 1/4 cup chopped Italian parsley
- 1 head butter lettuce
- 1 pound thin green beans, blanched and ends removed
- 1 can (12 ounces) albacore tuna, drained
- 4 hard cooked eggs, each cut into 4 wedges
- 2 large tomatoes, each cut into 8 wedges
- 1/2 cup Nicoise olives
- 3 tablespoons capers, drained

In medium saucepan with lid, bring water to a boil. Add barley and return to boil. Reduce heat to low, cover and cook 45 minutes or until barley is tender and liquid is absorbed. Cool. Toss cooked and cooled barley with 1/4 cup vinaigrette and parsley. To serve, arrange lettuce leaves on serving platter. Spoon barley over lettuce. Arrange green beans at one end of platter and albacore at the other end, breaking into chunks. Place egg and tomato wedges in center of platter. Sprinkle with olives and capers. Drizzle remaining 1/4 cup vinaigrette over all. **Makes 8 servings.**

Per serving: calories 298, protein 18g, carbohydrates 26g, fiber 6g, fat 14g, cholesterol 124mg, sodium 587mg.

Barley Bean Salad

Great with grilled burgers

- 2 cups cooked pearl barley, cooking directions below
- 1 can (15 ounces) kidney beans, drained
- 1 cup cooked fresh corn kernels
- 1 large red bell pepper, seeded and finely chopped
- 1/2 cup sliced celery
- 1/4 cup sliced green onion
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon or lime juice
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- Fresh cilantro or parsley sprigs, for garnish

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Mix barley with remaining ingredients, except garnish, in a large bowl. Cover and chill several hours or overnight to allow flavors to blend. Garnish with cilantro or parsley sprigs, if desired, and serve. **Makes 8 servings.**

To cook pearl barley

In medium saucepan with lid, bring 3 cups water to a boil. Add 1 cup pearl barley and return to boil. Reduce heat to low, cover and cook 45 minutes or until barley is tender and liquid is absorbed. **Makes about 3 to 3-1/2 cups.**

Per serving: calories 153, protein 5g, fat 4g, carbohydrates 26g, cholesterol 0, fiber 7g, sodium 191mg

Barley Avocado Chicken Salad

Summer supper in a snap

- 8 to 10 ounces precut salad greens
- 2 cups chopped cooked chicken
- 2 cups cooked pearl barley, cooking directions below
- 1 can (15 ounces) mandarin oranges, drained
- 1/2 ripe avocado, peeled, pitted and chopped
- 1/2 medium red onion, sliced into rings
- 1/4 cup prepared sweet vinaigrette

Combine all ingredients in large salad bowl. Toss gently and serve. **Makes 4 entrée servings.**

Per serving: calories 507, protein 24g, carbohydrates 75g, fat 15g, fiber 8g, cholesterol 51mg, sodium 229mg.

To cook pearl barley

In medium saucepan with lid, bring 3 cups water to a boil. Add 1 cup pearl barley and return to boil. Reduce heat to low, cover and cook 45 minutes or until barley is tender and liquid is absorbed. **Makes about 3 to 3-1/2 cups.**

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Barley Gazpacho

Cool idea for a hot day

- 3 cans (13 ounces each) low-sodium spicy tomato juice
- 2 cans (14-¹/₂ ounces each) chopped tomatoes and juice
- 2 cups cooked pearl barley, cooled
- 1 cup peeled, seeded and chopped cucumber
- 1 cup chopped red bell pepper
- ¹/₄ cup chopped cilantro or Italian parsley
- ¹/₄ cup chopped green onion
- 1 tablespoon chopped canned jalapeno chiles
- ¹/₂ teaspoon seasoned salt
- ¹/₂ ripe avocado, peeled, seeded and sliced

In large bowl combine all ingredients except avocado. Ladle into soup bowls and garnish with avocado slices. **Makes 8 servings.**

Per serving: calories 131, protein 3g, carbohydrates 24g, fiber 5g, fat 2g, cholesterol 0, sodium 372mg.

Easy Greek Barley Salad

Taste of the Mediterranean

- 1 cup pearl barley
- 3 cups water
- Salt
- ¹/₃ cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- ¹/₂ teaspoon dried oregano
- ¹/₄ cup finely chopped onion
- ¹/₄ cup finely chopped fresh parsley
- 2 medium tomatoes, diced
- 1 small green or red bell pepper, diced
- ¹/₂ cup crumbled feta cheese

In medium saucepan with lid, bring water and 1 teaspoon salt to a boil. Add barley and return to boil. Cover, reduce heat to low and cook 45 minutes or until barley is tender and liquid is absorbed. Combine olive oil, lemon juice, vinegar, oregano and ¹/₄ teaspoon salt; pour over hot cooked barley. Cool to room temperature. Gently stir in onions, parsley, tomatoes, bell pepper and cheese. **Makes 6 servings.**

Per serving: calories 266, protein 5g, fat 15g, carbohydrates 30g, cholesterol 8mg, fiber 6g, sodium 558mg.

Minted Barley Pitás

Garden-fresh and delicious

- ¹/₂ cup pearl barley
- 1-¹/₃ cups water
- ¹/₄ teaspoon salt
- ¹/₄ cup fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- ¹/₂ cup shredded carrot
- ¹/₂ cup finely sliced green onion
- ¹/₄ cup chopped fresh mint
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Pita bread

In medium saucepan with lid, bring water and salt to a boil. Add barley and return to boil. Reduce heat to low, cover and cook 45 minutes or until barley is tender and liquid is absorbed. Combine lemon juice, sugar, soy sauce and sesame oil; pour over hot cooked barley. Cool barley mixture to room temperature. When cool, stir in remaining ingredients except pita bread. Spoon filling into salad bowl and serve with pita halves. **Makes approximately 2-¹/₂ cups filling.**

Per 1/2-cup filling: calories 126, protein 4g, carbohydrates 22g, fat 3g, cholesterol 0, fiber 4g, sodium 651mg.

Health notes

Barley is heart-smart

Clinical studies prove that barley lowers total and LDL cholesterol. In fact, the FDA has authorized use of a health claim on qualifying food products about the role of beta-glucan soluble fiber from barley in reducing the risk of coronary heart disease.

Barley is your fiber source

Nutrition experts say we should eat 20 to 35 grams of fiber every day. Barley is an excellent fiber choice. A ¹/₂-cup serving of cooked pearl barley contains 3 grams of fiber. In comparison, ¹/₂ cup of cooked brown rice contains 1.75 grams of fiber and the same amount of cooked long-grain white rice contains less than a gram of fiber.