



**PARKDALE
FOOD CENTRE**
NEIGHBOUR TO NEIGHBOUR

**YOUR
LOCAL
FOOD
BANK**



FOOD OF THE MONTH

O A T S

OATS are a very important grain and are famous for their health benefits, especially for lowering high cholesterol, and one of the best ways to start off your day. Better than sugar laden cereals, oatmeal makes a heart healthy choice to be enjoyed daily. A steaming bowl of oatmeal takes minutes to prepare and has great staying power to keep you energized throughout the morning. Adding nuts and seeds and, a dash of cinnamon, will help to keep blood sugars balanced, a benefit for everyone, especially people with blood sugar concerns like diabetics.

Oats are the fourth leading grain produced in the United States behind corn, wheat and sorghum, a grass whose seeds are used to make flour and livestock feed. Today, only 4 to 5 percent of oats grown commercially are used for human food, the majority grown for horse and other livestock feed.

There are different varieties of oats distinguished by the method of processing. The least amount of processing, the higher the nutritional value.

- **Oat groats:** unflattened kernels good for breakfast cereals or in stuffings.
- **Steel cut oats:** this method is produced by running oats through steel blades, which slice them, creating a denser, chewier texture
- **Old fashioned oats:** these oats are steamed and then rolled; as a result they have a flatter shape than do other oats
- **Quick cooking oats:** Similar to old fashioned oats, but after steaming they are cut finely before rolling
- **Instant oat meal:** Produced by partially cooking the oats rather than simply steaming them and then rolling them

very thin. NOTE: Often sugar, salt and other ingredients are added to make the finished product. Higher on the Glycemic Index instant oatmeal is more likely to cause elevations in blood sugar levels. It is best to take the few extra minutes it takes to prepare the methods above.

HEALTH BENEFITS Oats are a very good source of the minerals manganese, selenium, and phosphorous as well as, magnesium and iron. A great source of vitamin B1 and soluble fibre, consuming oats on a regular basis will keep our digestive system running smoothly. Beta-glucan, a fiber found in oats helps to lower cholesterol by binding bile acids and removing them from the body. Studies have also shown that diabetics who regularly consume oatmeal and oatbran have a lower rise in blood sugar levels. Sugar laden cereals and breads have the opposite effect, spiking blood sugar levels to high levels in some.

STORING OATS – the best way to store your oats is in an airtight container and best in the refrigerator.

QUICK SERVING IDEAS

- For a hearty breakfast, cook oats and add a pinch of salt, sliced fruit such as apples or pears, 1 teaspoon of cinnamon, and nuts such as walnuts and/or seeds such as pumpkin or sunflower seeds. If you need a bit of sweetener, try a drizzle of honey.
- Stir a few tablespoons of oatmeal into your yogurt for added heart healthy nutrition.

Skip the high sugar, high sodium prepared cereals and try a steaming bowl of Oatmeal. A complete breakfast and a perfect way to start your day!!



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KICK-START OATMEAL

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup Old Fashioned Rolled Oats
- 2 cups water
- Pinch salt
- ½ - 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 grated apple (including the skin)
- Handful of nuts and/or seeds, raisins (optional)
- Milk to desired consistency

DIRECTIONS:

- 1** Bring water and salt to a boil in a small saucepan, then turn the heat to low and add the Oats
- 2** Cook for about 5 minutes, stirring regularly so that the oatmeal will not clump together. Add cinnamon, apple, nuts and seeds, raisins if using, stir. Cover the pan and turn off heat. Let sit for 5 minutes. Serve with milk.



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MUESLI No Cooking Required Oatmeal

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup Old Fashioned Rolled Oats OR, Quick Oats
- 1 cup boiling water
- ¼ cup raisins
- 1 teaspoon honey
- Cinnamon to taste

DIRECTIONS:

- 1** Pour 1 cup boiling water over Oats. Let stand overnight. In the morning, divide oats into two bowls.
- 2** Top with remaining ingredients. This is where you can get creative and add any seasoning to taste.



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SLOW COOKER OATMEAL (Serves 1)

DIRECTIONS

- 1** In your slow cooker, add 4 cups of milk of choice, cinnamon, grated apple, a drizzle of honey and 2 cups of oats.
- 2** Set your slow cooker on low. If you have a timer, set it for 4-5 hours before waking up.

- 3** You will have a hot, and satisfying meal that serves 4. Save any left overs and add to yogurt for a snack the following day.
- 4** Making the switch from boxed breakfast cereals to oatmeal, will have huge benefits towards a healthier you. Small changes make = big changes.



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***** Experiment with different ingredients and then share your recipes!! *****