

Crediting **Grains** in the **Child Nutrition Programs**

Tip Sheet

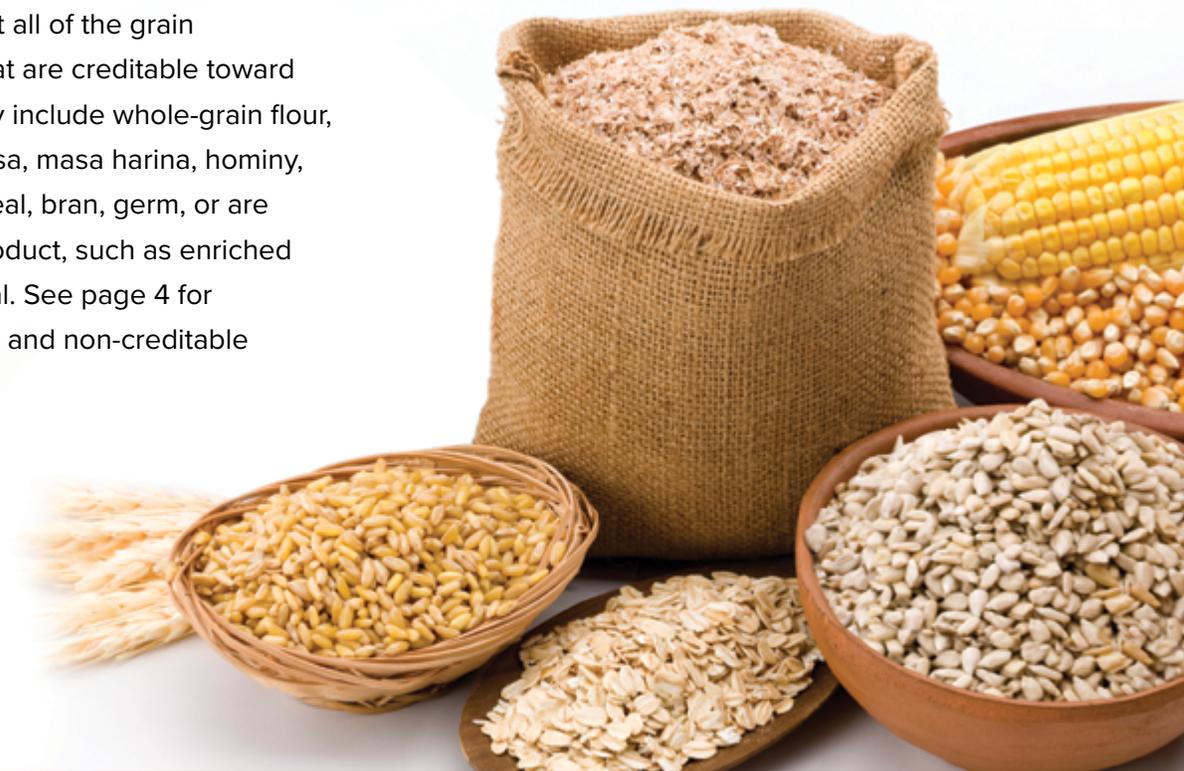
Part 1: Creditable Grains in Child Nutrition Programs



Grain products made with creditable grains are a required component of reimbursable meals offered in Child Nutrition Programs (CNP), such as the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), Preschool meal pattern, the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). Items made with creditable grains may also be offered as part of a reimbursable snack in Preschool, CACFP, SFSP, and NSLP afterschool snack service (NSLP afterschool snacks). This tip sheet identifies creditable grains in CNP that meet meal pattern requirements.

What Is a Creditable Grain?

Creditable grains represent all of the grain ingredients in a product that are creditable toward the grains component; they include whole-grain flour, whole-grain meal, corn masa, masa harina, hominy, enriched flour, enriched meal, bran, germ, or are included in an enriched product, such as enriched bread or in a fortified cereal. See page 4 for a list of common creditable and non-creditable grain ingredients.



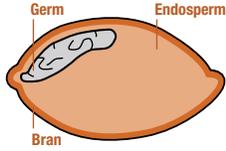
More training, menu planning, and nutrition education materials can be found at TeamNutrition.USDA.gov.

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Terms and Definitions



Whole Grains contain all parts of the grain kernel (bran, germ, and endosperm).



Enriched Grains meet the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Standard of Identity for enrichment ([21 CFR Section 137](#)):

- The terms “enriched” or “fortified” indicate the addition of one or more vitamins, minerals, or protein to a food;
- Enriched/fortified grains or flours are labeled as “enriched” or “fortified.” Alternatively, when included in the ingredient list of a product, the nutrients are listed after the grain ingredient (i.e., wheat flour (niacin, iron, riboflavin, folic acid, thiamin)).



Bran is the seed husk or outer coating of grains. Bran ingredients are often a good source of B vitamins, iron, potassium, and fiber.



Germ is the vitamin-rich portion of the grain kernel. Germ ingredients are often a good source of B vitamins, phosphorus, and zinc.



Minimum Creditable Amount of Grains: When serving a grain product in the CNP, the product must contain a minimum amount of creditable grain in order to credit toward the grains component. These minimums are:

- 0.25 ounce equivalent (oz eq) for school meals, NSLP afterschool snacks, Preschool, and CACFP. The minimum creditable amounts do not apply to the infant meal pattern.
- 0.25 servings of grains/breads for SFSP and NSLP afterschool snacks (until July 1, 2025).



Whole Grain-Rich: School meals (including NSLP afterschool snacks beginning July 1, 2025), Preschool, and CACFP (with the exception of infants) have a whole grain-rich requirement. Whole grain-rich is the term designated by FNS to indicate that the grain content of a product is between 50 and 100 percent whole grain with any remaining grains being enriched. See [Crediting Grains in Child Nutrition Programs Tip Sheet, Part 2: Identifying Grain Products That Are Whole Grain-Rich](#) for details and examples of whole grain-rich products.



Nixtamalized corn (i.e., corn treated with lime), such as hominy, corn masa, and masa harina are considered whole grain when evaluating products for meal requirements. These ingredients are processed in a way that increases the bioavailability of certain nutrients, so they have a nutritional profile similar to whole corn.

Evaluating Grains for NSLP & SBP



All grain ingredients must be creditable **and** provide at least 0.25 oz eq grains per serving. See Page 4: [Common Grain Ingredients Chart](#) for examples of creditable grains.

- Any **non-creditable grains** must be less than 2 percent by weight or less than 0.25 oz eq. If non-creditable grains are present in a greater amount, the product is not creditable. See page 4 for a list of common non-creditable grains.
- A **grain derivative**, typically only present in small amounts (less than 2 percent), can be ignored (e.g., wheat gluten, wheat dextrin). If a grain derivative is present in a greater amount, the product is not creditable.

Evaluating Grains for Preschool, CACFP, SFSP, & NSLP Afterschool Snack Service

The grain product is creditable if it contains at least:

- 0.25 oz eq grains per serving—for NSLP/SBP, NSLP afterschool snacks,* Preschool & CACFP; or
- 0.25 grains/breads serving—for SFSP & NSLP afterschool snacks,*

and one of the following is true:

- The first ingredient (or second after water) is an enriched grain, whole grain, bran, or germ, or the ingredient list includes a listing of nutrients used to enrich or fortify the grain flour or meal (refer to the [Common Grain Ingredients Chart](#) on the next page); or
- The grain product is labeled as “enriched” (e.g., enriched long grain rice), “fortified” (e.g., fortified breakfast cereal) or “whole grain” (e.g., whole wheat bread); or
- Though the primary grain is not creditable, there are other creditable grains in the product. In these cases, obtain documentation from the manufacturer stating the grams of creditable grains per serving. If there are enough creditable grains per serving (at least 0.25 oz eq or 0.25 grains/breads), this product can contribute toward the grains component.



Note: For more information on determining the oz eq grains per serving, see [Crediting Grains in Child Nutrition Programs Tip Sheet, Part 3: Program Requirements](#).



Note: Although products whose first ingredient is whole grain or are labeled as whole grain are creditable, they are not necessarily whole grain-rich. See [Crediting Grains in Child Nutrition Programs Tip Sheet, Part 2: Identifying Grain Products That Are Whole Grain-Rich](#) to determine whether a product is whole grain-rich.

*Effective July 1, 2025, for NSLP afterschool snacks, grain products must contain at least 0.25 oz eq grains.

Common Grain Ingredients (not all inclusive)

Creditable Grains		Non-Creditable Grains
Whole Grain Ingredients	Enriched Grain & Bran and Germ Ingredients	Grain Ingredients
<p> Tip: Look for the words “whole” or “whole grain”</p>		<p> Tip: If present, look for the phrase “contains less than 2% of the following:”</p>
<p>Wheat</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bulgur • Bromated whole-wheat flour • Cracked wheat • Crushed wheat • Entire wheat flour • Flaked wheat • Graham flour • Sprouted wheat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wheat berries • Wheat groats • White whole-wheat flour • Whole durum flour • Whole-grain wheat • Whole-grain wheat flakes • Whole-wheat flour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-enriched flours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ All-purpose flour ◦ Bromated flour ◦ Durum flour ◦ Wheat flour ◦ White flour • Farina • Semolina
<p>Rye</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flaked rye • Rye berries • Rye groats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sprouted whole rye • Whole rye • Whole rye flour 	
<p>Barley</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dehulled barley • Dehulled barley flour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole barley • Whole barley flour 	
<p>Corn</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corn masa* • Hominy* • Hominy grits* • Masa harina* • Popcorn • Whole corn, dried • Whole cornmeal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole-grain corn • Whole-grain corn flour • Whole-grain grits 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enriched all-purpose flour • Enriched bromated flour • Enriched durum flour • Enriched durum wheat flour • Enriched farina • Enriched semolina • Enriched wheat flour • Enriched white flour • Wheat bran • Wheat germ
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enriched rye flour • Rye bran
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enriched corn flour • Enriched grits • Enriched yellow corn flour • Corn bran
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barley malt • Malted barley flour
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corn flour • Corn fiber • Degermed corn • Degerminated cornmeal • Grits • Stone ground corn • Yellow corn flour • Yellow corn meal

*Nixtamalized corn (i.e., corn treated with lime), such as hominy, corn masa, and masa harina are considered whole grain when evaluating products for meal requirements. These ingredients are processed in a way that increases the bioavailability of certain nutrients so they have a nutritional profile similar to whole corn.

Common Grain Ingredients (not all inclusive)

Creditable Grains		Non-Creditable Grains
Whole Grain Ingredients	Enriched Grain & Bran and Germ Ingredients	Grain Ingredients
<p> Tip: Look for the words “whole” or “whole grain”</p>		<p> Tip: If present, look for the phrase “contains less than 2% of the following:”</p>
<p>Oats</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oats • Oatmeal (all types) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oat groats • Whole-grain oat flour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oat bran • Oat fiber
<p>Rice</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brown rice • Brown rice flour • Sprouted brown rice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wild rice • Wild rice flour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enriched rice • Enriched rice flour • Rice bran • Rice flour
<p>Other</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amaranth • Amaranth flour • Buckwheat • Buckwheat flour • Buckwheat groats • Einkorn berries • Millet • Millet flour • Quinoa • Spelt berries • Sprouted buckwheat • Sprouted einkorn • Sprouted spelt • Teff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teff flour • Triticale • Triticale flour • Whole-grain einkorn • Whole-grain einkorn flour • Whole-grain sorghum • Whole-grain sorghum flour • Whole kamut • Whole spelt • Whole-grain spelt flour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bean or legume flour (e.g., soy, chickpea, lentil) • Nut or seed flour (any kind) • Potato flour • Tapioca flour • Vegetable flour (any kind)





Test Your Knowledge

Yes or No

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All the products below contribute at least 0.25 oz eq grains per serving. Based on the product label, are the following grain products made with creditable grains?

1. Wheat bread

INGREDIENTS: Whole-wheat flour, water, enriched wheat flour [flour, malted barley flour, reduced iron, niacin, thiamin mononitrate (vitamin B1), riboflavin (vitamin B2), folic acid], honey, yeast, wheat bran, salt, soybean oil, sugar, preservatives [CALCIUM PROPIONATE, SORBIC ACID], datem, monoglycerides, grain vinegar, citric acid, soy lecithin.

Yes No

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2. Snack crackers

INGREDIENTS: Whole-wheat flour, enriched wheat flour (wheat flour, niacin, reduced iron, thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid), sunflower oil and/or canola oil, sea salt, and less than 2% of the following: organic cane sugar, oat fiber, yeast, malted barley flour, rosemary extract (antioxidant), and ascorbic acid (antioxidant).

Yes No

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3. High fiber bread

INGREDIENTS: Whole rye, water, whole rye flour, salt, oat fiber, yeast.

3a. Is it creditable for school meals?

Yes No

3b. Is it creditable for the CACFP and SFSP?

Yes No





Answers

All products below contribute at least 0.25 oz eq grains per serving. Based on the product label, are the following grain products made with creditable grains?

1. Wheat bread

INGREDIENTS: **Whole-wheat flour**, water, **enriched wheat flour** [flour, malted barley flour, reduced iron, niacin, thiamin mononitrate (vitamin B1), riboflavin (vitamin B2), folic acid], honey, yeast, **wheat bran**, salt, soybean oil, sugar, preservatives [CALCIUM PROPIONATE, SORBIC ACID], datem, monoglycerides, grain vinegar, citric acid, soy lecithin.

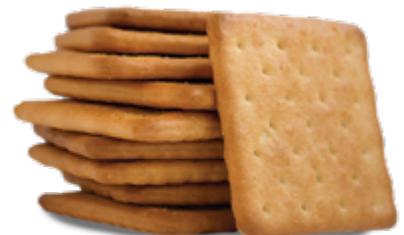
- **Yes. For school meals consider all grain ingredients. Looking at the three bolded grain ingredients, the first is whole grain (whole-wheat flour), the second is enriched (enriched wheat flour), and the third (wheat bran) is bran, which is assessed as an enriched grain. For all other CNP, the first grain ingredient is whole grain (whole-wheat flour) and therefore, it is creditable.**
- No



2. Snack crackers

INGREDIENTS: **Whole-wheat flour**, **enriched wheat flour** (wheat flour, niacin, reduced iron, thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid), sunflower oil and/or canola oil, sea salt, and less than 2% of the following: organic cane sugar, **oat fiber**, yeast, **malted barley flour**, rosemary extract (antioxidant), and ascorbic acid (antioxidant).

- **Yes. For school meals consider all grain ingredients. Looking at the four bolded grain ingredients, the first (whole-wheat flour) is whole grain, the second (enriched wheat flour) is enriched, the third (oat fiber) and fourth (malted barley flour) are not creditable, but are present at less than 2 percent, and therefore can be ignored. For all other CNP, the first grain ingredient is whole grain (whole-wheat flour) and therefore, it is creditable.**
- No





Answers

3. High fiber bread

INGREDIENTS: **Whole rye**, water, **whole rye flour**, salt, **oat fiber**, yeast.

3a. Is it creditable for school meals?

- Yes
- No. Based on this label, it is not creditable for school meals. Looking at the three bolded grain ingredients, the first two (whole rye and whole rye flour) are whole grain, but the third (oat fiber) is not creditable. Therefore, based on the label, this grain product is not creditable. NOTE: This bread may be creditable for school meals if additional product information is obtained from the manufacturer and indicates that oat fiber is present at less than 2 percent of the product weight.**

3b. Is it creditable for CACFP and SFSP?

- Yes. It is creditable for CACFP and SFSP. Because the first ingredient is whole grain, the product is creditable. You would need to perform additional steps to see if this item can be served as a whole grain-rich item in the CACFP.**
- No

