

Oats

Delicious and hearty energy!

Cooking Oats

Oats come in many different forms and vary in cooking times. The less the oat has been processed (steamed, rolled, or cut), the longer amount of time it will need to cook.

Most packages of oats will have detailed cooking instructions but the basic guidelines below will give you some general recommendations.

Old Fashioned or Quick Oats

Old fashioned and quick oats can be cooked in the microwave or on the stovetop. Generally, the ratio is about 2 cups of water to 1 cup of oats. The amount of water can vary based on the desired texture of the oatmeal. More water equals runnier and mushier oatmeal and less water results in a firmer texture.

Stove Top: Bring the water to a boil, add oatmeal, reduce heat and simmer 1-5 minutes.

Microwave: Add water and oats to a bowl. Microwave on high for 1-3 minutes. Stir every minute.

Cooking Oat Groats and Steel-Cut Oats

The ratio for cooking oat groats and steel cut oats is about 3 cups water to 1 cup of oats.

1 cup oat groats or steel cut oats
3 cups water
¼ teaspoon salt (optional)

In a medium pot bring water to a boil. Add oats and salt (if desired). Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 20-30 minutes for steel cut oats and 45-55 minutes for oat groats. Avoid stirring during cooking. Turn off the heat and allow to sit, covered for 5-10 minutes. Remove lid, stir and serve. Add spices, sugar, chopped fruit, nuts, or other toppings of choice.

Short-Cuts

To reduce cooking time you can soak oat groats or steel-cut oats overnight. Place 1 cup oats in a heavy saucepan and cover with 3 cups of water. Leave to soak overnight. In the morning, add salt and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook with pan partially covered for 5 to 6 minutes for steel cut oats or 15-20 minutes for whole oat groats.

Oats are done when the water is absorbed and they are tender. Refrigerate leftovers. Oats reheat easily in the microwave.

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Oatmeal Mix Ins

Try these delicious mix-ins with your oat groats, steel cut oats, old fashioned oats, or quick-cooking/instant oats.

- Dash of brown sugar and drizzle of maple syrup or honey
- Fresh chopped apples and dried cranberries
- Fresh chopped bananas and a spoonful of peanut butter
- Sliced fresh or frozen strawberries with a splash of sugar and milk
- Fresh or frozen blueberries with chopped walnuts and a splash of sugar and milk
- Fresh or frozen blackberries with chopped almonds and a sprinkle of sugar
- Fresh or frozen diced peaches or mangoes with a dash of brown sugar
- Coconut shavings, banana, and pineapple pieces
- Graham cracker pieces and yogurt
- Fruit of choice and a dollop of yogurt
- Dash of brown sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves
- Dash of brown sugar and chopped pecans
- Raisins and a dash of cinnamon
- Handful of dried fruit, nuts, and a splash of milk
- Diced onions, carrots, celery, thyme, and lemon zest to make an oat pilaf

Oatmeal Nut Pancakes

1½ cups whole-wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
2 cups low-fat milk
2 eggs

2 tablespoons canola oil
2 tablespoons honey
1 cup oats, uncooked
1 cup pecans, finely chopped (optional)

Combine flour, baking powder, and salt in medium mixing bowl and mix well. Add in milk, eggs, oil and honey and mix until smooth. Stir in oats and pecans. Bake on non-stick griddle or one sprayed with cooking spray.

Yield: 8-10 pancakes.

The unique characteristic of oats is that they contain substantial amounts of both soluble and insoluble fiber.

Soluble fiber is unique because it attracts water and forms a gel during digestion. This gel slows digestion helping you to feel fuller longer and helps reduce cholesterol in your body, promoting heart health.

In-soluble fiber is important for bulk. It too helps you to feel full by filling up your stomach potentially aiding in weight management. The bulk created from In-soluble fiber also helps promote digestive regularity.

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Crispy Granola

2 egg whites
¼ cup honey
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon vanilla
Dash salt
3 cups uncooked rolled oats
1 cup shredded coconut (optional)
½ cup sesame seeds (optional)
½ cup chopped walnuts or almonds (optional)
½ cup raisins or other dried fruit (optional)

Preheat oven to 325°F. Spray a large, shallow baking pan with cooking spray, set aside. Put egg whites in large bowl and mix with fork until frothy. Stir in honey, cinnamon, and salt. Add oats and any other optional ingredients (except dried fruit) of choice. Stir until ingredients are well coated with egg mixture. Spread mixture on baking sheet. Bake 20-30 minutes or until mixture is golden brown, stirring every 5 minutes. Remove from pan, add dried fruit if using, and cool completely on wire rack until crispy and crunchy. Store in airtight container.

Crunchy Oat Baked Chicken

1 tablespoon canola oil
2 teaspoons chili powder
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon ground cumin
¾ teaspoon salt
1½ cups quick oats, uncooked
1 egg, lightly beaten
1 tablespoon water
4 boned and skinned chicken breast halves (about 5-6 ounces each)
Chopped cilantro (optional)
Salsa (optional)

Heat oven to 375°F. In a shallow bowl stir together oil, chili powder, garlic powder, cumin, and salt. Add oats and stir until evenly coated. In a second bowl beat egg and water with fork until frothy. Dip chicken in egg and water mixture, and then in the seasoned oat mixture. The chicken should be covered completely with the oats. Bake chicken for 30 minutes or until chicken is cooked through and oat coating is golden brown. Serve plain or garnished with cilantro and salsa (optional).

Oats that are stored in an airtight container in a cool, dry, dark place and are not opened will keep for up to 8 years. Opened oats will store for about a year if placed in a cool, dry place. Oats contain natural oils that may cause them to go rancid. They should smell clean, sweet, and grassy when you open the container. If they smell old, sour, and/or rancid, throw them out.

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