About CSPI, publisher of Nutrition Action Healthletter

The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), founded in 1971, is an independent nonprofit consumer health group. CSPI advocates honest food labeling and advertising, safer and more nutritious foods, and pro-health alcohol policies. CSPI’s work is supported by Nutrition Action Healthletter subscribers and foundation grants. CSPI accepts no government or industry funding. Nutrition Action Healthletter, first published in 1974, accepts no advertising.

Spaghetti, linguine, fusilli, penne. Americans love their pasta. But many people have never heard of orzo, the silky-textured pasta that looks like oversized rice.

If that’s you, here’s your chance to make your first orzo your best orzo.

RiceSelect Whole Wheat Orzo and DeLallo 100% Organic Whole Wheat Orzo don’t toss out the bran and germ like refined pastas do. So you get not just the couple of B vitamins and the iron that’s added back to white pasta, but a higher dose of fiber (6 to 9 grams), plus roughly 10 percent or more of a day’s vitamin B-6, magnesium, zinc, copper, and selenium in each 200-calorie cup.

And whole wheat orzo has more fiber, protein, and selenium than you’d get in brown rice, which takes longer to cook (unless you buy it parboiled).

How do you prepare orzo? Like any pasta, just boil it in plenty of water until al dente, about 8 minutes (6 minutes if you’ll be using it in a cold pasta salad). Then just drain and you’re ready for business.

Toss the cooked orzo with plenty of chopped fresh basil and ripe tomatoes with a splash of extra-virgin olive oil. Or mix in some fresh dill, mint, scallions, feta cheese, lemon juice, and olive oil. Or toss with roasted veggies—cherry tomatoes, garlic, onions, bell peppers, zucchini, eggplant, anything that’s in season.

You can also treat orzo like rice. Try it in a simple risotto (see the Dish of the Month).

No matter how you prepare it, one thing’s for sure: your diners will want some morzo.

RiceSelect: (800) 993-7423
DeLallo: (877) 335-2556

If you go to Denny’s, you know your Slams. Take the Grand Slam (2 pancakes, 2 eggs, 2 bacon strips, and 2 sausage links). Its 860 calories, 14½ grams of saturated fat, 500 milligrams of cholesterol, and 2,240 mg of sodium supply too much of almost everything before 9 a.m.

Want a Slam you can hold in your hands? Denny’s has you covered. The Grand Slamwich has “two scrambled eggs, sausage, crispy bacon, shaved ham, mayonnaise and American cheese on potato bread grilled with a maple spice spread.” In case that’s too skimpy, the Slamwich comes with hash browns.

Even without the hash browns, your sandwich hits 1,320 calories and two days’ worth of sat fat (42 grams) and sodium (3,070 mg). It has the calories of 4½ McDonald’s Egg McMuffins...with an extra 20 grams of sat fat. Bonus: the Slamwich holds a regular smorgasbord of processed meats that may raise your risk of diabetes and colon cancer. And not a fruit or vegetable (other than fried potatoes) in sight!

With ordinary hash browns, the sandwich hits 1,530 calories. Get the Everything Hash Browns instead and the cheese and gravy boost your grand total to 1,800 calories, 50 grams of sat fat, and 6,890 mg of sodium.

To be fair, Denny’s lets you “Build Your Own Grand Slam” with any four items. But other than oatmeal and egg whites, the best choices—like fruit and yogurt—cost extra.

That should send many patrons scurrying back to the Build Your Own Belly side of the menu.

Denny’s: (800) 733-6697