

I'm all about easy to prepare, nutritionally packed options to offer my small family when it comes to meal preparation. Usually 2-3 nights a week we enjoy one of our favorites; GBG's. For an easy versatile go to dinner we simply change the grains, beans and greens making this one dish meal a family favorite.

GBGs (Grains, Beans & Greens)

Ingredients:

Grains – white or brown rice, lentils, quinoa, amaranth, potatoes – there are so many!

Beans – black, white (great northern), garbanzo, red kidney... again, so many to choose from.

Greens – kale, spinach, chard, mustard the more robust, the better. Consider adding basil, dill, arugula, lettuce, cilantro, or parsley before serving for a little bit more brightness.

Sauce – “sauce du jour” whatever appeals today. Try guacamole, salsa, salad dressing, pesto...

Directions:

Prepare Grains and Beans separately and set aside. Toast your grains lightly in good quality olive oil before adding liquid – improves flavor and starch development while helping keep the grains separate– and consider cooking them with sweated onions and/or a good stock instead of water to build in more flavor. Remember not to salt the beans until right before you finish cooking them, to improve tenderness. Cook more than one meal's worth – they make great sides or an encore a day or two later with a different sauce.

We like to steam our robust greens lightly, enough to be chewable, to preserve all those yummy, delicate nutrients. If the oxalates in some greens (like mustard) make your family pucker (or if you struggle with kidney stones) try steaming then sauteing briefly.

Finish by combining all your ingredients (minus delicate sauces like guacamole – add them right before serving) and bringing up to serving temperature. For a more elegant plate, keep them separate as you heat them, and then compose them prettily on the plates.

Don't be bashful about making your own sauces, and most of them also refrigerate well stored in full, tightly-covered glass. Grains refrigerate well up to five days.

Ideas:

Greek GBG – Quinoa, garbanzo beans, romaine lettuce. Add: sliced Kalamata olives, tomatoes, red onion slices and use a mustard vinaigrette or Greek salad dressing as your sauce

Mexican GBG – small white potato, quinoa or rice, black or kidney beans, romaine lettuce. Add: sliced olives, tomatoes, mild chiles and top with Avocado slices and salsa

Classic GBG – Grain/quinoa, any beans (small white ones are nice), any greens (spinach is a favorite) and top with sauce

Note: when the grains/quinoa is served warm in your bowl the delicate greens (like spinach, chard or baby greens) will wilt without losing nutritional value, and making a nice addition.

Consider batch cooking the components once a week, make your dressings or sauces ahead of time as well and dinner comes together even more quickly