

## On Top of the Grain Chain...The Mighty Oat

by John Rizzo

**F**rom Granola to breakfast cereal; there are plenty of good foods that contain oats. Although the majority of all oats grown are for animal feed, this versatile grain has made a statement from a nutritional point of view.

Oatmeal and oat bran are considerable sources of dietary fiber containing components that have been proven effective in lowering blood cholesterol; ultimately reducing the risk of heart disease. Additionally, oats are loaded with natural phytochemicals which can reduce the threat of certain types of cancers, notably breast, ovarian and prostate cancer.

### Fun Oat Facts

On a per gram basis, oats contain a higher concentration of protein, calcium, iron, magnesium, zinc, copper, manganese, thiamin, folacin and Vitamin E than any other unfortified whole grain, such as wheat, barley, corn or rice.

Oatmeal Month is celebrated each January, the month in which we buy more oatmeal than any other month of the year.

The most popular oatmeal topping is milk. Other popular toppings are: sugar, fruit (raisins, bananas) and butter/margarine. Among the most unusual are: eggnog, peanut butter, cottage cheese and brewer's yeast.

Eighty percent of U.S. households have oatmeal in their cupboard.

Quaker® Oats was the first U.S. breakfast cereal to receive a registered trademark.

Oatmeal cookies are the No. 1 non-cereal usage for oatmeal, followed by meatloaf and cakes/pies.

The ancient Greeks were the first people known to have made a recognizable porridge (cereal) from oats.

The portrait of the "Quaker Man" on the package has only been updated three times since its debut in 1877.

Quaker® Oats contains about 26,000 rolled oats.

Americans eat oatmeal as a breakfast cereal 89 percent of the time; 11 percent of the time we use oatmeal as an ingredient.

*Source: www.hungrymonster.com*

If you're looking for ways to increase your dietary intake of oats, consider substituting about half rolled oats for bread crumbs in recipes such as meatloaf, meatballs, etc. I assure you that no one will know the difference.

### Apple Cinnamon Oatmeal Pancakes      Yield: 16 3-inch cakes

Buttermilk	1.25	Flour	¾ cup
Oats, Quick	2/3 cups	Baking Soda	1 tsp
Eggs, Whipped	1	Salt	1/3 tsp
Brown Sugar	2 TBL	Cinnamon	1 tsp
Peeled Apples, Shredded	2/3 cups	Vegetable Oil	2 TBL

In a mixing bowl, combine the buttermilk and the oats; let stand for 15 minutes.

In a separate bowl mix together the egg, sugar and apples. Stir in the flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, vegetable oil, and the oats and buttermilk mixture. Combine all ingredients well; be careful not to over mix.

On a hot, lightly greased griddle, ladle batter into 3 inch pancakes and cook for approximately 1-2 minutes on each side.