

Amaranth

March 2009

We are very grateful to Cindy Leep who came to speak to us on celiac disease in general (lots of good, basic information for those newly diagnosed) and also on amaranth. Amaranth is a grain/four most of us have not been familiar with – one of the “new” flours available to us with celiac/gluten intolerance. Some of what she shared on amaranth: It has the highest protein of all grains. Amaranth contains lysine, an amino acid not found in most grains. It is an ancient grain, the Aztecs, Mayans used amaranth and even fashioned it into images of gods. And birds love it! Amaranth can also be grown in your vegetable/herb garden ~ there are both red and white varieties of the amaranth plant. Here is part of a chart she showed us on the comparative nutritional value of various flours:

	Wheat	Rice	Corn	Millet	Milk	AMARANTH
Protein	12.8	5.6	9.4	5.6	4	19
Fiber	2.3	.03	3	2.6	0	5.6
Calcium	29.4	9	7	0	120	250
Lysine	60	12	44	6	72	80

And the benefits of Amaranth go even higher when it is popped. You can use amaranth as a thickener. It can be used in soups in its popped form (think of it as a substitute for barley in beef-barley soup). The flour helps retain moisture in baked goods when used in a flour baking mix. When using it in baking, use 1 part amaranth to 3 parts or 4 parts of other flours (or approximately 20% of the mix). Cindy brought some cookie bars made with the popped form of amaranth ~ delicious! To obtain amaranth, she suggested going online to New World Foods. Well, if you have been looking online for the website for the amaranth supplier and have been frustrated like I have.... I have to apologize. The name is spelled differently. It is Nu-World Foods and their website is www.nuworldfoods.com Cindy also is a volunteer in the Uganda Amaranth Project which trains people in Uganda to grow amaranth and market amaranth products. A very interesting presentation!