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MUST-TRY

## 5 Must-Try New Grain Bowls in LA

By Lesley Balla | January 7, 2016



Grain bowls hit **pinnacle status last year**, but the healthy dish isn't going anywhere soon. There are a lot of reasons for the rise of layered masterpieces made with quinoa, rice, bulgur, farro and other whole grains, plus vegetables, fruits, nuts and other proteins. For one, wholesome grains are a perfect base for chefs to add whatever they want, like a painter with a blank canvas. Second, more farmers are seeing the ways of grain — that is, growing organic, heritage grains for chefs and home cooks to use — and it's rather exciting in the culinary world. Grain bowls became synonymous at places like Sqirl, and while the ever-changing menu is still fantastic at the Los Feliz restaurant, many others have and continue to jump on the grain train around town. Here are six new bowls to seek out now.

**Ricebar:** The Filipino rice bowls here come courtesy former Patina chef Charles Olalia, along with owner Santos Uy, who opened this tiny counter-only spot downtown. The grains used, mostly heirloom rice, are non-GMO and fair-trade, and make a fine base for things like pork longganisa with pickled vegetables and ginger-scented chicken tinola with green papaya and chili leaves. The rice used changes daily, but you'll find things like Tinawon Fancy brown rice; Kalinga Unoy, a rusty-red, speckled rice with a nutty flavor; and black rice, all from the Philippines.



**Baroo:** Grains, especially fermented grain, are at the heart of this off-the-radar (though very beloved by

just about every food writer/blogger in town) East Hollywood spot. Chef and owner Kwang Uh calls Baroo his "freestyle experimental kitchen," with seasonal, often organic, grain and vegetable bowls, such as the bibim, filled with assorted grain like oat, quinoa and bulgur, with vegetable crudite; and the signature Norook, a mixed-grain bowl with Jobs tears, kamut and farro, roasted beet cream, concentrated kombu dashi, toasted seeds, macadamia nuts, fingerlime and rose onion pickle.



**Wally's Beverly Hills:** Wally's isn't all truffles and caviar. For lunch daily, chef David Feau serves a grain salad with brown Satsuki rice, buckwheat, kuri and butternut squash, pomegranate, pumpking seeds and a sherry-hone vinaigrette. Eat that early in the day, go for the cheese and wine later.



**Osso:** This Arts District haunt is surprising for a lot of reasons, especially that it became known as a fried chicken hot spot almost out of the gate. But chef Nick Montgomery really spreads his wings with the weekend brunch menu by offering a bowl of Grist & Toll purple barley with pickled market vegetables.



**Plant Food & Wine:** You'll find whole grains in a lot of dishes at chef Matthew Kenney's plant-based spot on Abbot Kinney, from farro balls with spaghetti squash to millet "polenta." But the grain bowl, which is offered at both lunch and dinner, is a signature dish with ancient grains, kale, roasted squash, sea beans and green tahini.