

Erewhon Barley Plus Hot Cereal (Vegan, Soy-Free, Wheat-Free)

I was never much of a "cream of ..." fan growing up. Even the dairy-free hot cereals that carried this prefix really turned me off. Perhaps it was because my dad's beloved Cream of Wheat always turned out lumpy. Yet, something about Barley Plus pulled me in. Perhaps it was the fact that it contains my three favorite grains (and not a thing else!): Organic Barley, Organic Oat Bran, and Organic Brown Rice.

So I set out to see if my beloved grains could win me over to the "cream of ..." side.

From start to finish (that is, from opening the package to spooning hot cereal in my bowl and dousing it with "milk"), this took just 5 minutes; a definite bonus on any busy morning. It still had that Cream of Wheat texture, but it was certainly heartier in taste and the simple instructions on the back kept me from ending up with lumps.

Use caution though, the first time I left it unattended for just a moment, and ended up with grains stuck to the bottom of the pan. This cooks up fast, so just hang out by that stove, stir, and relax for a few.

I spiked mine with a good dose of cinnamon, some raisins, and a pinch of salt (as instructed), topping it with an unsweetened milk alternative. This left me with a rather savory breakfast that didn't start me off with a sugar rush and was quite easy on my stomach. As much as I love grains, they often weigh like a brick in my gut in the morning. Not a peppy was to start the day.

Honestly, I am still hesitant on the whole creamy hot breakfast cereal thing, as I usually like a little texture, but Barley Plus may be winning me over. It was so much more soothing on my digestive system (for those early hours in the day) and so very warming for fall and winter.

I was also very pleased with the serving size. I usually need to use two packets of instant oatmeal (or a cup of whole oats if making from scratch) to fill me up ... and consequently end up with a rock gut. Yet a single serving of the Barley Plus was generous, but not over the top, as it soaked up a good amount of liquid.

This cereal might also be an excellent cereal option for toddlers and kids too, rather than reaching for Cream of Rice or Wheat. Of course, it isn't suitable for Celiacs or the gluten intolerant, but for those seeking a breakfast alternative to wheat, Barley Plus is worth consideration. This is a third party review by Alisa Fleming, author of *Go Dairy Free: The Guide & Cookbook*. For more information on this product, see the U.S. Mills Website (the makers of Erewhon Cereals). Erewhon Cereals are also available to order online via Amazon for a discount.