

Cooking with Quinoa

A recently rediscovered ancient "grain" native to South America, quinoa was once called "the gold of the Incas," who recognized its value in increasing the stamina of their warriors. Not only is quinoa high in protein, but the protein it supplies is *complete protein*, meaning that it includes all nine essential amino acids.

The seeds cook very quickly, in only 15 minutes. Dry roasting quinoa in a pan or in the oven, before cooking will give a toasted flavor, and it can be cooked in fruit juice to add character to the flavor for use as a breakfast cereal or in desserts. Cold salads consisting of quinoa and chopped vegetables or cooked beans make a quick, easy, and nutritious dish. Quinoa flour is used in making pasta and a variety of baked goods such as pancakes, bread, muffins, and crackers.

Quinoa seeds can be sprouted and eaten as raw, live food for snacks or in salads and sandwiches. To sprout the seeds, soak about 1/3 cup seeds in a jar for 2 to 4 hours, then drain and rinse the seeds twice a day for 2 to 4 days. When the sprouts are about 1 inch long, place them near a window for chlorophyll to develop, which will give them a vibrant green color.

How to Select and Store: Whether purchasing quinoa in bulk or in a packaged container, make sure that there is no evidence of moisture. When deciding upon the amount to purchase, remember that quinoa expands during the cooking process to several times its original size. If you cannot find it in your local supermarket, look for it at natural foods stores, which usually carry this super grain. Store quinoa in an airtight container. It will keep for a longer period of time, approximately three to six months, if stored in the refrigerator.

Tips for Preparing Quinoa: Before cooking, the seeds must be rinsed to remove their bitter resin-like coating, which is called saponin. Quinoa is rinsed before it is packaged and sold, but it is best to rinse again at home before use to remove any of the powdery residue that may remain on the seeds. The presence of saponin is obvious by the production of a soapy looking "suds" when the seeds are swished in water. Placing quinoa in a strainer and rinsing thoroughly with water easily washes the saponin from the seeds. An effective method is to run cold water over quinoa that has been placed in a fine-meshed strainer, gently rubbing the seeds together with your hands. To ensure that the saponins have been completely removed, taste a few seeds. If they still have a bitter taste, continue the rinsing process.

To cook the quinoa: Add one part of the grain to two parts liquid in a saucepan. After the mixture is brought to a boil, reduce the heat to simmer and cover. One cup of quinoa cooked in this method usually takes 15 minutes to prepare. When cooking is complete, you will notice that the grains have become translucent, and the white germ has partially detached itself, appearing like a white-spiraled tail. If you desire the quinoa to have a nuttier flavor, you can dry roast it before cooking; to dry roast, place it in a skillet over medium-low heat and stir constantly for five minutes.

Since quinoa has a low gluten content, it is one of the least allergenic "grains," but its flour needs to be combined with wheat to make leavened baked goods. Quinoa flour can be used to make pasta, and quinoa pastas are available in many natural foods stores.

A Few Quick Serving Ideas:

- Combine cooked chilled quinoa with pinto beans, pumpkin seeds, scallions and coriander. Season to taste and enjoy this south-of-the-border inspired salad.
- Add nuts and fruits to cooked quinoa and serve as breakfast porridge.
- For a twist on your favorite pasta recipe, use noodles made from quinoa.
- Sprouted quinoa can be used in salads and sandwiches just like alfalfa sprouts.
- Add quinoa to your favorite vegetable soups.
- Ground quinoa flour can be added to cookie or muffin recipes.
- Quinoa is great to use in tabouli, serving as a delicious (and wheat-free) substitute for the bulgar wheat with which this Middle Eastern dish is usually made.

Quinoa Cereal with Fresh Fruit

Prep and Cook Time: 20 minutes

Ingredients:

Quinoa

1 cup quinoa
2 cups water
sea salt to taste

Topping

1/4 cup rolled oats

A combination of your favorite fruits, pumpkin seeds, and sliced almonds:

1/4 cup blueberries
1 TBS pumpkin seeds
1 TBS sliced almonds

Top with 1/2 cup dairy-free milk alternative (e.g., one made from soy, rice, or oats) and 1 tsp honey

Place well-rinsed quinoa with water and salt in a saucepan, **cover** and bring to a boil. Turn the heat to low, keep covered, and simmer for 15 minutes. For each serving, combine 1/4 of the quinoa with rolled oats. Top with blueberries, pumpkin seeds and almonds and serve with almond milk and honey. **Serves 4**

Due to the relatively high oil and fat content of quinoa, the grains and flour should be stored in glass jars in the refrigerator. Use the grains within a year and flour within 3 months.

Toasted Quinoa Salad

3/4 cup uncooked quinoa
1 cup diced carrots
1/2 cup chopped red bell pepper
1/4 cup minced parsley or cilantro
2 sliced green onions
juice of 1 lemon and 1 lime (or 1 - 2 tablespoons of each)
1-1/2 tablespoons tamari soy sauce
2 cloves minced or pressed garlic
1 teaspoon chili sauce (tobasco) (or use a pinch of cayenne, a few red pepper flakes, etc.)

Rinse quinoa and drain. Put in a pot and dry toast until a few grains begin to pop. Add 1-1/2 cups of water, bring to a boil, cover and simmer for about 15 minutes, or until the water is absorbed. Remove from heat and let stand for 10 minutes. Fluff with a fork and let cool.

Mix carrot, red pepper, parsley and green onion in large bowl. Add cold quinoa and toss to combine, Whisk together lemon and lime juices, tamari, garlic and chili sauce. Pour over salad and combine well. Chill until serving time. This recipe can be fun. Try throwing in a few fresh raw peas, some fresh raw corn, fresh sliced raw green beans, etc.

Walnut Rosemary Quinoa

1 tablespoon sesame oil
1 small onion
1-1/2 cups quinoa, rinsed in boiling water and drained
1 small red bell pepper, diced
3 cups water
1 tablespoon Tamari soy sauce (or to taste)
1 teaspoon fresh rosemary or 1/2 teaspoon dried
1 cup fresh or frozen peas, thawed if frozen
1/2 cup walnuts, chopped

Preheat oven to 350. Heat oil in a medium saucepan; add onion and quinoa. Sauté over medium heat, stirring constantly for about 3 minutes. Add red bell pepper and sauté an additional 2 minutes. Add water, soy sauce, rosemary and peas (if using fresh peas). Bring to a boil and cover; simmer 15 minutes or until water is absorbed. Meanwhile, roast walnuts in 350 oven for 5 to 10 minutes. When quinoa is cooked, turn off heat and mix in walnuts and frozen peas (if using frozen peas). Let sit an additional 10 minutes and serve.

Cooking with Red Quinoa

Red Quinoa cooks just the same as white. The directions are:

Boil 2 cups of water.

Add 1 cup of quinoa, cover, and turn down the heat to low.

After about 15 minutes, lift up the cover and stir.

You'll know it's done when the grain turns slightly transparent, and the curly string-like germ has separated from the circular part.

Red Quinoa is great on its own when eaten with a stir-fry, but you can also make it its own dish, similar to a rice pilaf. Simply sauté your favorite veggies and add them to the cooked quinoa. For even more flavor, cook quinoa in veggie broth instead of water.

Red Quinoa & Broccoli Salad with Almond Honey Vinaigrette (serves 3; total cost per serving: ~ \$1.65)

2 c cooked red quinoa
1 small head of broccoli cut into very small florets (about 1 cup's worth)
2-3 green onions, chopped
6 oz extra firm tofu, cubed
1 clove garlic, minced
2 T cooking oil
1/4 c sliced almonds (optional)

Almond Honey Vinaigrette

3 T raw creamy almond butter
1 1/2 T fresh lemon juice
1 t honey
Splash of white vinegar
Pinch of salt
2 T water

Make the dressing by combining the first 5 ingredients in a small bowl and whisking together until smooth. Add the water a few drops at a time to help thin the dressing a bit. Cover and set aside.

Heat a couple tablespoons of oil in a medium skillet and add the garlic. When lightly browned, add the tofu and a dash of salt. Stir-fry for about 3 minutes or until tofu begins to brown just a bit. Add the broccoli and cook quickly until the broccoli becomes bright and tender.

Combine the quinoa, tofu, and broccoli in a large bowl and mix together gently. Add a couple tablespoons of dressing and mix until completely combined. Drizzle with some extra dressing on each serving, garnish with sliced almonds and scallions, and enjoy!

Crockpot Red Quinoa and Chicken (soup)

1 cup RED quinoa (soaked overnight in water, than drained and rinsed in a strainer. If you don't soak your grains, still rinse to remove a bitter substance from the grain)
2 cups of chicken broth
3/4 cup grape or apple juice
2 cups of water
2 teaspoons dried thyme
1 teaspoon of salt
6 large carrots, peeled and cubed
1 onion, minced

2 chicken breasts or thighs
3 Tablespoons of butter (opt, for added richness and taste)

Throw all the ingredients in your crockpot, cook on high for about 4 hours or on low, 8. Shred the chicken when done, and stir into the stew and you are done!

Black Bean, Red Pepper, Corn, and Quinoa Salad

5 Tb [Olive oil](#)
1/2 c Quinoa; rinsed in cold water
1 c [Chicken](#) or vegetable broth
1/4 ts Ground [cumin](#)
1/4 ts [Salt](#)
2 tb [Lime juice](#)
1/8 ts Ground black [pepper](#)
1 c Cooked or canned black beans
1 c Whole-kernel [corn](#)
1 lg Ripe [tomato](#); peeled, seeded,
1 sm Sweet [red pepper](#); seeded and
2 Green [onions](#); finely
3 tb Chopped [cilantro](#) leaves
2 tb Chopped fresh [parsley](#) leaves
2 c Mixed salad [greens](#)

1. In 1-quart saucepan, heat 1 tablespoon oil over medium heat. Add quinoa and stir until toasted and aromatic--about 5 minutes. Stir in broth, cumin, and salt; heat to boiling over high heat. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer until liquid is absorbed--about 15 minutes. Remove from heat and let stand 5 minutes; with fork, fluff quinoa and set aside at room temperature to cool.

2. In medium-size bowl, whisk together remaining 4 tablespoons oil, the lime juice, and black pepper. Stir in black beans, corn, tomato, red pepper, green onions, cilantro, chopped parsley, and cooked quinoa.

3. To serve, divide greens among 4 salad plates. Spoon quinoa mixture onto greens. Serve at room temperature or refrigerate until 30 minutes before serving.

Quinoa Pilaf

- 2 Tbsp. [olive oil](#)
- 1 medium [onion](#) chopped finely
- 3 cloves [garlic](#) minced
- 1 cup finely -diced [carrots](#)
- 1 medium [red pepper](#) chopped
- 2 cups quinoa rinsed thoroughly through a fine sieve
- 4 cups vegetable [broth](#)
- 1 cup frozen [peas](#) thawed
- salt and [pepper](#) to taste

Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and cook until soft, 3 minutes. Add garlic, carrots and red pepper, cooking until soft, about 5 minutes. Add quinoa and broth. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce heat to medium-low. Simmer, covered, 20 minutes or until water is absorbed. Stir in frozen peas and salt and pepper.