

RECIPE for health

JULY 2009 In partnership with Health4U and University Housing

Featured Food:

QUINOA



By Peggy Crum, RD, Health4U Nutritionist

Quinoa (KEEN-wah) may be suffering an identity crisis! Not only is its name difficult to pronounce, quinoa is a seed used like a grain in the culinary world.

A staple of the ancient Incan civilization, most of us in the United States are not familiar with quinoa. The seed can be served as a side dish like rice or as a main dish. With its high protein content, quinoa is perfect for those on a plant-based diet. Quinoa is also gluten-free, giving it an even broader appeal.

Quinoa has a natural protective coating called saponin. In the fields, the bitterness of saponin keeps the seeds safe from birds and insects. While most of the saponin is removed during processing, quinoa still requires a thorough rinsing before you use it. Measure the amount of quinoa required for your recipe, place it in a fine mesh strainer and then spray with cold water until the sudsy residue is rinsed away.

With its growing popularity, quinoa can be found in most grocery stores in both whole and flour forms. Packaged in boxes or bags and sometimes available in bulk bins, you will find it near the rice and other grains. Colors range from pale yellow, to red, to black. For storage, keep quinoa in a cool, dry cabinet in its original package and once opened, store it in an airtight container on a shelf.

Quinoa has a mild, nutty flavor and a slightly crunchy texture. For a nuttier flavor, roast it in a dry skillet for a few minutes after rinsing. Then use two parts water to one part quinoa, add a generous pinch of salt, and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes. As it cooks, quinoa develops a tiny opaque spiral on each individual seed, encircling its outside and curling into its center — a timer from nature to let you know your quinoa is done.

Basil Pesto Quinoa

Recipe tested by Jill Yarbrough

University Housing Dining Services. (Serves 4 to 6)

- 2/3 cup quinoa
- 1 1/3 cup water
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup fresh basil leaves
- 2 Tablespoons freshly grated parmesan cheese
- 1 Tablespoon + 2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup red bell pepper, diced
- 1/2 cup green onions, sliced
- 1/4 cup pine nuts, lightly toasted
- Salt and pepper to taste

Wash quinoa. Combine with water and salt, and bring to a boil. Cover and simmer for about 15 minutes, until water is absorbed. Put in bowl and chill in refrigerator. Blanch basil for 30 seconds in boiling water. Cool in ice bath. Squeeze excess liquid from basil and put into food processor with parmesan cheese, lemon juice, garlic and olive oil. Blend until nearly smooth. Add red peppers and onions to quinoa. Stir in basil mixture. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Top with pine nuts right before serving.

Serve as a side dish or as a great addition to a green salad.

We invite you to visit The Gallery, open this summer for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Visit www.eatatstate.com for hours and menus. Look for next month's featured Recipe for Health at The Gallery. The recipe will be showcased in various dining services around campus in the fall.

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