

Extension

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Newsletter

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Keen-What? Quinoa

Anne Zander, Family & Consumer Sciences Agent, Boulder County

Quinoa (keen-wah) is a delicious food that counts as a whole grain. It can add variety and essential nutrients to your diet, especially protein, fiber, calcium and magnesium. Quinoa is really not a grain, but a “seed” that can be prepared as a grain. It can be enjoyed at breakfast as a hot cereal or with other meals as a hot or cold side dish. It comes in different colors including black, red, pink and ivory. It’s naturally gluten-free so can be used as a substitute for whole grains. Quinoa is one of the few plant foods that is a complete protein, meaning that it contains all the essential amino acids.



Storing and Preparing Quinoa

Quinoa can be stored in its original packaging. If bought in bulk it can be stored in a cool, dark place in a glass or other food grade storage container. It can be used to replace rice, couscous or pasta in a one-to-one ratio. Quinoa is prepared very much like rice with one part dry quinoa to two parts liquid, which could be water or broth. When cooked it freezes well in an airtight container if there are any leftovers.

Quinoa contains a naturally occurring substance that acts as a natural pesticide to protect the plant from bugs called “saponin”. It is bitter and has a soapy taste which is a turn off to bugs as well as people, which is why the substance needs to be removed by being rinsed off before being cooked and eaten. Read the packaging, but if purchased in bulk rinse quinoa before cooking.

Put the seeds in a deep bowl and cover with water. Gently rub between the palms of your hands for a few seconds. Then drain through a fine mesh strainer and repeat one more time. Quinoa seeds are small and will run through the strainer along with the water unless the strainer has very small holes. Your rinsed quinoa is now ready to cook.

Before adding liquid and boiling, heat quinoa in a pan for 4-5 minutes. This evaporates the remaining water left in quinoa after rinsing and gives it a better texture, flavor and smell by warming its natural oils.

You will need twice the amount of liquid as you have seeds. One cup of raw quinoa yields about 3 ½ cups cooked quinoa. Bring the liquid and the quinoa to a rolling boil. Turn the heat to low and cover the pot with a lid. Set the timer for 20 minutes (at high altitude boil 2 minutes more for every 1000 feet above sea level). When the timer goes off, turn the heat off, keep the pot covered and let the quinoa sit for another 20 to 30 minutes or until any remaining liquid is absorbed. The quinoa will be light and fluffy.

Let's Talk

Kids often love quinoa because it has a very nutty yet neutral flavor, but if you need some suggestions to encourage family members to try this nutrient packed food then here are some suggestions:

1. Tell your family the story about how 5,000 years ago the Inca considered it gold because it was so nutritious and gave them so much energy. Inca warriors ate balls of quinoa and fat to keep them going on long marches and in battle. The Inca's were able to run long distances at high altitudes because of this powerful food!
2. If you have some hopeful future astronauts in the house, let them know that NASA has proposed quinoa as an ideal food for spaceflights!
3. Children involved in sports, might want to know that the protein and carbohydrates in Quinoa can give them the energy they need for their sport. Tell them the potassium in quinoa makes the heart beat regularly by triggering their heart to squeeze, and that its' B vitamins can support their happy moods.
4. Make individual quinoa bowls for dinner. Each person gets a bowl of quinoa and the opportunity to add whichever healthy ingredients they decide. Lay out bowls of dried or fresh fruits. Hint, diced apples and pears taste great with quinoa. Nuts and yogurt are a good additions to either sweet fruit toppings or savory toppings like, cut veggies, herbs, beans, cheese or olive oil. Encourage children to make their bowls as colorful as possible. Kids love to be in control of what they eat and this meal lets them do just that.

What Do You Think?

Please click on the link below to take a short survey of the Family Matters Newsletter.

<http://studentvoice.com/colostate/familymattersnewsletteren2015>

If you receive a printed copy of this newsletter, a printed copy of the evaluation should be attached.

If not, please call Sheila Gains at 303-730-1920 to request a return postage paid printed copy of the evaluation. Thank you!

Recipe for Health: Quinoa Crusted Chicken Fingers

Ingredients

- 2 pound chicken tenders or skinless boneless breasts, sliced into 3-inch long tenders
- 1/4 teaspoon of salt (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika
- 2 cups cooked red or white quinoa
- 1/2 cup whole wheat or seasoned breadcrumbs
- 2 egg whites
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

Instructions

- Spread out quinoa on wax paper or aluminum foil. Sprinkle breadcrumbs over the quinoa. With fingers tips, squeeze the quinoa and breadcrumbs together until the moisture of the quinoa is absorbed. Place egg whites in shallow bowl. Sprinkle chicken with salt, garlic powder, pepper, and paprika.

- Place egg whites in shallow bowl. Dip chicken in whites and then into quinoa mixture. Place onto a clean plate. Warm oil in large skillet over high heat.
- When oil is hot, add chicken and reduce heat to medium. Cook each side 4-5 minutes, turning once, until crust begins to brown, and chicken is no longer translucent. Serve immediately.



Photo: Skinny Chef Pinterest

Nutritional Stats Per Serving (1/2 pound chicken fingers): 363 calories, 31 g protein, 29 g carbohydrates, 12 g fat (1.8 g saturated), 72 mg cholesterol, 3 g fiber, 545 mg sodium.

Recipe By: Chef Jennifer Iserloh/Skinny Chef