



QUINOA

Ingredient
of the **Month**



Presented by ACF Chef & Child Foundation
and Clemson University

Pronounced keen-wah, this grain-like crop has been a mainstay in South American cuisine and was considered “the mother grain” in the ancient Incas civilization. Today, it is finally receiving much deserved recognition in the United States. In fact, it was ranked as one of the hot trends for 2010 in the National Restaurant Association’s survey of American Culinary Federation (ACF) chefs.

Although not botanically a true grain, but rather the fruit of an herb plant, quinoa has been hailed as the “supergrain of the future” because it serves as a complete protein and contains a balanced source of vital vitamins and minerals. The edible seeds of the quinoa plant cook like rice but in half the time and also expand four times their original size. With a slight crunch and mild nutty flavor, these tiny bead-shaped seeds become translucent and take on a light, fluffy texture when cooked.

Healthful ingredient contribution

- **PROTEIN:** As one of the few plant sources that contains all the essential amino acids, quinoa is considered a complete protein with an average of 16.2% protein, compared with 7.5% for rice, 9.9% for millet and 14% for wheat.
- **MINERALS:** Being particularly high in magnesium, manganese, phosphorous, copper and iron, quinoa is also a good source of potassium, calcium and zinc.
- **VITAMINS:** Vitamin E and several B vitamins
- **FIBER**
- **FATS AND CARBOHYDRATES:** Quinoa is higher in unsaturated fats (good fats) and lower in carbohydrates than other grains.

Substitutions

- Although much lighter than rice, quinoa is a suitable substitute for most rice recipes, including rice pilaf.
- For a hearty and healthy alternative, try using quinoa as a replacement for rice, pasta, couscous or other grains in side dishes, soups, salads and desserts.



Varieties and uses

Several varieties of quinoa seeds are available, ranging from dark brown to almost white in color. However, the larger white varieties are most common and are considered superior. Since its seeds have a natural, bitter coating to protect them from birds and insects, they should be rinsed well with water before cooking. For a nuttier flavor, toast the seeds in a hot, dry pan for approximately five minutes before cooking. To cook, bring one part quinoa and two parts liquid to a boil; cover and reduce to a simmer for about 15 minutes. Here is a look at other uses for quinoa:

- Whole grain quinoa can be added to soups, stir-fries, casseroles and salads for a nourishing addition of bulk, flavor and texture.
- Quinoa flour can be used for gluten-free baking. Quinoa flour also works well when combined with wheat flour or corn meal, in biscuits, bread, muffins, cookies and other baked goods.
- Quinoa pastas usually include another grain, such as wheat, but there are also wheat-less varieties, including spaghetti, shells and elbows.
- The quinoa plant also has nutrient-rich leaves that are similar to spinach and can be eaten as a leafy vegetable.

Storage

- Store quinoa in an airtight container in a cool, dry, dark cabinet.
- For a longer period, approximately six months to a year, store quinoa in the refrigerator or freezer.

Serving size

1/4 cup of uncooked quinoa = 1 cup cooked quinoa and approximately 16% of your daily value recommendation for protein



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RECIPE

CRANBERRY CARROT QUINOA

Yield: 12 servings
(serving size: 1/2 cup)

Quinoa:

- 1 1/2 cups quinoa
- 3 cups water
- 1 cup dried cranberries
- 1 cup shredded carrots
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced green onions
- 2 T. pine nuts, toasted

Dressing:

- 3 T. fresh orange juice
- 2 T. fresh lemon juice
- 1 1/2 T. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 T. grated orange rind
- 1/2 t. salt
- 1/4 t. black pepper
- 1 garlic clove, minced

Method:

Rinse quinoa; cover with water in a saucepan. Boil 15-20 minutes. In a large bowl, combine cranberries, carrots, onions and pine nuts. Stir in cooked quinoa. To prepare dressing, combine orange juice, lemon juice, olive oil, orange rind, salt, pepper and garlic in a small bowl, stirring with a whisk. Pour over quinoa mixture; toss well to combine.



Nutrition Information

Calories: 140 Fat: 4.5g Sat Fat: 0.5g
Carbs: 23g Fiber: 3g Protein: 3g
Vit. A: 30% Vit. C: 6%
Calcium: 2% Iron: 6%