

Quinoa (pronounced KEEN-wah) has the highest nutritional profile and cooks the fastest of all grains. It is an extremely high energy grain and has been grown and consumed for about 8,000 years on the high plains of the Andes Mountains in South America. The Incas were able to run such long distances at such a high altitude because of this powerful grain.

### Characteristics

- Contains all eight amino acids to make it a complete protein
- Has a protein content equal to milk
- High in B vitamins, iron, zinc, potassium, calcium, and vitamin E
- Gluten-free; easy to digest
- Ideal food for endurance
- Strengthens the kidneys, heart, and lungs

### Uses

When quinoa is cooked, the outer germ surrounding the seed breaks open to form a crunchy coil, while the inner grain becomes soft and translucent. This double texture makes it delicious, versatile, and fun to eat. To save time, cook a lot of quinoa at once, and eat it as leftovers. Quinoa can be reheated with a splash of soy or nut milk for breakfast porridge; you can add dried fruit, nuts, and cinnamon for a sweet treat. Add finely chopped raw vegetables and dressing for a cooling salad, or add chopped, cooked, root vegetables for a warming side dish. Store dry, uncooked quinoa in a cool, dry, dark place in a tightly closed glass jar for up to one year.

### Preparation

Before cooking, quinoa must be rinsed to remove the toxic (but naturally occurring) bitter coating, called saponin. Saponin, when removed from quinoa, produces a soapy solution in water. Quinoa is rinsed before it is packaged and sold, but it is best to rinse again at home before use. Place quinoa in a grain strainer and rinse thoroughly with water.

### Basic Quinoa

*Prep Time: 2 minutes*

*Cooking Time: 15-20 minutes*

*Serves 4*

#### Ingredients:

- 1 cup quinoa
- 2 cups water
- seasonings to taste

#### Directions:

- Using a fine mesh strainer, rinse quinoa with cool water until the water runs clear.
- Combine quinoa and water in a saucepan. Cover and bring to a boil.
- Reduce heat to a simmer and continue to cook covered for 15 minutes or until all water has been absorbed.
- Remove from heat and let stand for 5 minutes covered; fluff with a fork.
- Season as you like.

*\*For a delicious toasted flavor, dry roast for 5 minutes in saucepan before adding liquid.*

See below for two simple and quick recipes using quinoa. For more delicious recipes, check out the book *Integrative Nutrition*.

### Quinoa Instant Breakfast

*Prep Time: 5 minutes*

*Cooking Time: 25 minutes*

*Serves 4*

#### Ingredients:

3 cups water	1/4 cup raisins
1 cup quinoa	1/4 cup almonds
1/4 cup diced squash	1/4 cup sesame seeds
1/4 cup thinly sliced carrot rounds	1/4 cup soy or nut milk

#### Directions:

- Using a fine mesh strainer, rinse quinoa with cool water until the water runs clear.
- Bring 3 cups of water to a boil.
- Add quinoa to boiling water.
- Reduce heat to a light boil and simmer 20 minutes.
- Halfway through cooking, add squash, carrots, raisins, almonds, sesame seeds.
- Remove from heat and add soy or nut milk.

### Quinoa Salad

*Prep Time: 5 minutes*

*Cooking Time: 15-20 minutes*

*Serves 6*

#### Ingredients:

1 1/2 cups cooked quinoa  
3 cups water  
1/4 cup lime juice  
1/2 cup olive oil  
1 cup parsley, chopped  
1/2 cup scallion, chopped  
1/2 cup tomato, diced  
salt and pepper to taste

#### Directions:

- Using a fine mesh strainer, rinse quinoa with cool water until the water runs clear.
- Add rinsed quinoa to sauce pan over low heat; stir with wooden spoon until all water has evaporated and grains emit a faint, roasted aroma.
- Add water and a pinch of salt; stir once to dislodge any grains that may be stuck to bottom of pan.
- Cover and bring to boil.
- Lower heat and simmer, covered, for about 10-15 minutes, or until all water is absorbed.
- Remove from heat and let stand five minutes covered; fluff with a fork.
- Combine all ingredients in bowl and serve at room temperature.