

Cranberry Walnut Quinoa Salad

Serves 6 as a starter or side dish or 4 as a main course

1 cup quinoa

2 cups water

½ teaspoon salt or to taste

¾ cup dried cranberries

1 cup frozen green beans or peas, thawed

¼ cup chopped walnuts

¼ cup sliced green onion (optional)

¼ cup balsamic vinegar

1 ½ tablespoons olive oil

1-2 cloves of garlic (to taste) minced

freshly ground pepper

Quinoa (KEEN-wa), the whole grain super-food!

The quinoa seed is high in protein, calcium, and iron, and it is a relatively good source of vitamin E and several B vitamins. It contains a nearly perfect balance of all eight essential amino acids, making quinoa a complete protein food. Quinoa is 12% to 18% protein. Four ounces per day, or approximately 1/2 cup, is sufficient to meet a child's daily protein needs.

Before cooking, the seeds must be rinsed to remove the bitter resin-like coating, which is the phytochemical saponin. Although quinoa is rinsed before it is packaged and sold, it is advisable to place the seed in a strainer and rinse again at home before use to remove any remaining residue.

Quinoa is an easy-to-prepare and excellent alternative to white rice or couscous, or it can serve as a high-protein breakfast food mixed with honey, almonds, or berries.

Quinoa has delightful and unique characteristics that give it an appearance and texture all its own. The taste is a mild, delicate, slightly nutty flavor.

1. Rinse the quinoa in several changes of water. Combine the 2 cups water and ½ teaspoon salt in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to simmer, cover, and continue cooking until all water is absorbed, about 20 minutes. Remove from the heat, uncover, and allow to cool for 15 minutes.
2. In a medium bowl, combine the cooked quinoa, dried cranberries, green beans or peas, walnuts, and green onion (if using) until well mixed.
3. In a small bowl, whisk the balsamic vinegar, olive oil, and garlic until well blended. Pour over the quinoa mixture. Toss until well blended.
4. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Chill in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes before serving.

Nutrition Information

Calories: 234, Fat: 8g, Saturated fat 1g, Carbohydrate 36g, Protein 5g, Cholesterol 0 mg, Fiber 3 g.