

Healthy Eating: All About Quinoa

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Most folks call quinoa (pronounced "keen-whah") a grain, but it's actually a seed — one that originated thousands of years ago in the Andes Mountains. Dubbed "the gold of the Incas," it's treasured because of its nutritive value (more protein than any other grain or seed!). I love it for its yummy, nutty flavor.

Why You Should Try It

As I said, quinoa actually has more protein than any other grain or seed and offers a complete protein, meaning it contains all the essential amino acids our bodies can't make on their own. It's also a great source of calcium and is high in lysine, the B vitamins and iron. Better still, the seed is easy to digest and gluten free.

The Different Kinds

You'll usually find quinoa in its tan or yellow form — though it comes in many colors: orange, red, pink, purple and black. Look for any color quinoa in your local health food stores; they all work — and taste — great in dishes. I always stock up in bulk to keep costs down. Stored in an air-tight container in the fridge, quinoa keeps for several months.



How to Cook Quinoa

It may seem foreign, but cooking quinoa is simple. First, I always rinse the quinoa. It has a natural soapy coating that helps protect the seed from pests but there's no need to eat it. To clean, just place the quinoa in a strainer and rinse with cold water for a minute or two.

Next is the cooking. Use one-part quinoa to two parts liquid. Plain water works fine, but I like experimenting with a vegetable or chicken broth for extra low-calorie flavoring. Place both the quinoa and the liquid in a saucepan, and bring it to a boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer, cover and let the seeds cook for 10 to 15 minutes — or until the water is absorbed, the seed is translucent and the germ is partially detached (it will look like a little feather or spiral).

When cooked, quinoa has a crunchy, nutty flavor. It works great in savory side salads, mixed into veggie burgers and more. I also love it as a hot breakfast cereal — just pour in some cow, soy or almond milk and add chopped nuts for a crunchy topping.

Source: <https://www.foodnetwork.com>