

Quinoa Salad with Edamame, Black Beans, and Sweet Corn

Quinoa is a very small seed twice the size of amaranth and just a bit smaller than millet. It has many of the characteristics of a cereal or grain. It can be cooked like rice or ground into flour for bread or pasta. Quinoa originated in South America where it was an important staple food in pre-Columbian Andean civilizations dating back more than 5,000 years. It was held in high regard by the Incas and discouraged as a crop by the Conquistadors and following Spanish settlers because of its association with indigenous religious ceremonies.



Quinoa	2 cups
Liquid	4 cups
Frozen corn	(1) 16 oz bag
Frozen edamame	(1) 16 oz bag
Cooked black beans	1-2 cups
Red pepper	1 large
Garlic powder	2 tsp
Onion powder	2 tsp
Adobo seasoning	2 tsp
Fresh Orange Juice	1 each
Fruit Infused Vinegar	to taste
Parsley	½ Bunch
Tarragon, Mint	
Chervil or Cilantro	1-2 bunches
Bragg's Aminos	to taste
Pepper	to taste

I first bumped into quinoa back in 1984 working with John Novi at his landmark restaurant *The Depuy Canal House* in mid-state New York across the Hudson from Hyde Park and the Culinary Institute of America where I was a student. We did a number of different things with quinoa, but a salad very similar to this one remains one of my favorites! Quinoa isn't a light grain by any means; it has a very distinctive, almost pungent quality, but is still light enough to provide a unique flavor backdrop that can enhance your favorite ingredients even if they are light. It cooks quickly and is ideal for summer. But the most outstanding thing about quinoa is its nutritional value; it is high in fiber and low on the glycemic index with a balanced set of essential amino acids making it a complete protein...and the cherry on top is that it's also gluten-free making it one of the rare foods that's suited for a dietary protocol for just about any chronic illness! I still like it 'cause it's just plain ole good eatin'!

You cook quinoa 2:1 Water to seed just like you do rice. Make sure that the water is boiling for the grain goes in. To make a fluffier version dry the quinoa in a dry sauté pan prior to adding to the water. Toss the seeds until they just start to pop and dance; you'll smell them when they are done. Get the quinoa out of the pan onto a cool plate quickly because they will burn if left to sit in the hot pan for even a minute or two. Use a paper plate and that way you can just fold in the edges and pour it easily into the boiling water, but be very careful because the hot quinoa will super boil the water and it will come over the sides and burn you; add it *slowly* while stirring. It takes some patience to stand there and toss it but the uniquely nutty quality and exceptionally fluffy consistency of the end product make that time well spent!

This is designed to be a real fast salad. Simmer the quinoa covered until it takes up all the liquid, usually about 20 minutes or so, and then turn the heat off and let it stand another 10 minutes undisturbed with the lid on. Either pressure cook black beans just until they are done, then drain, wash and dry them or use canned beans that have also been washed and drained. For me, canned beans seriously diminish this salad, they can be used, but you can't replace what a fresh cooked bean adds here! You can add the edamame and corn to the warm quinoa frozen right from the freezer and the frozen vegetables will cool the quinoa while being thawed all at the same time which makes the salad table ready in just minutes! If you can cut the peppers and herbs in the time it takes to cook and cool the quinoa you can actually have this salad on the table in less than 30 minutes!

This is a very basic recipe and the variations are endless. Chipotle, cumin, and fresh cilantro make a *real* nice Mexican version, and this is an ideal backdrop to feature some elegant flavored vinegars. Thyme and oregano make excellent additions and some flavored Mrs. Dash products go nicely here as well! Celery and onion are things that I add here sometimes, but I would caution against fresh garlic unless you are a garlic fiend or have vampires in the neighborhood. Garlic seems to easily overpower this salad and it only gets worse as it sits, so I suggest using granulated or powered garlic with this salad.



As well as being meatless and oil-free, this recipe for quinoa salad is also gluten-free and casein-free!