



Amazing Benefits of Quinoa, And Why You Should Try It

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Quinoa. You've often heard about it and probably wondered what all the buzz was about. It's been touted as a 'superfood.' Recipes on the internet abound. You can pretty much use it in salads, cakes, cupcakes, and smoothies. Here is my blog post about what it is, why it is good for you, and a quick & easy way of taking your first taste.

A word of caution: Quinoa has not been associated with any known food allergies as of this writing. But please do your research and see if you may or may not have an adverse reaction to it.

What Is It?

Quinoa (pronounced 'keen-wah') has quite the story to tell.

It was cultivated as a viable food source in the Andean regions of Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia and Chile. Archaeologists have confirmed evidence that this practice began a good 3,000 to 4,000 years ago, and continues to this very day.

It was and still is grown for its edible seeds. Interestingly, quinoa is very closely related to other vegetables like spinach and beetroot. After processing - involving the removal of the outer skin - preparing Quinoa seeds for eating means that it is cooked in the same way as rice. The green leaves of Quinoa can also be consumed, but having readily available supplies of this has not been made commercially viable.

Quinoa is gluten free, and has been potentially earmarked as a food item to be included in future space expeditions by NASA.

Why It's Good For You

Let's have a closer look at what cooked quinoa is comprised of:

- 72% water,
- 21% carbohydrates,
- 4% protein, and
- 2% fat.

It is a fantastic source of the following,

- Manganese: This is an essential nutrient for building healthy bones. In addition to building bones, it also aids the body in its metabolic activity. And,
- Phosphorus: A vital element in the growing process, that helps with the maintenance of healthy bones & teeth.

Quinoa is also a moderate source of,

- Fiber: Crucial in maintaining natural bowel health and movement. Fiber helps in lowering cholesterol and control blood sugar levels.
 - Folate: An important component of DNA synthesis and repair.
- And,
- Minerals (Iron, zinc, and magnesium).

A Quick & Easy Way Of Taking Your First Taste

Here's a quick and easy recipe I found on SkinnyMs (<http://skinnyms.com>). It sounds delicious and can be whipped up as either a post-workout fixer-upper, or even as a meal replacement.

Quinoa Banana Berry Smoothie

(<http://skinnymys.com/quinoa-banana-berry-smoothie/>)

Yield: 2 servings | Serving Size: 1 cup | Calories: 328 | Total Fat: 2.8 g | Saturated Fat: 0 g | Trans Fat: 0 g | Cholesterol: 0 mg | Sodium: 4 mg | Carbohydrates: 71.8 g | Dietary Fiber: 9.8 g | Sugars: 34.4 g | Protein: 7.2 g | SmartPoints: 11 |

Ingredients

1/2 cup cooked and chilled Quinoa

1 frozen banana (pre-sliced)

1 cup frozen raspberries

1-1/2 cups green tea (home brewed without added sweeteners is best), add more or less depending on consistency preferred.

6 ice cubes

Directions

Place all ingredients in the blender and blend until smooth.

Tip: Quinoa can be purchased in the organic or health food section of most supermarkets. We recommend Inca Red, pre-washed. Also, red Quinoa is slightly sweeter than white or black, which is perfect for this recipe.

Quinoa. Go ahead and give it a try. You may be surprised by what you find in terms of its taste and how easily it can be incorporated into any number of dishes.