



GET KEEN ON QUINOA!

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Whole grains have been lauded for their wonderful health benefits in reducing the risk of diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, stroke, cancer and inflammation. The Health Promotion Board of Singapore advises that out of five to seven servings of rice and alternatives, two to three servings should be whole-grain foods.

Quinoa, which is pronounced keen-wah, ranks high among the whole grains, for it is gluten-free, rich in all essential amino acids and has a good amount of omega fats!

While quinoa is usually considered to be a whole grain, it is actually a seed, but can be prepared like whole grains such as rice or barley. A smart carbohydrate, Quinoa is among the best low glycaemic whole grains such as rye, barley, bulgur and oats.

Although this tiny seed has been around in the world for a long time, it has only become very popular among health enthusiasts in the last few years.

In fact, so popular now that the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation officially declared the year 2013 as "The International Year of Quinoa." Peru, which is the world's biggest consumer of quinoa, even started to include quinoa in school lunch subsidies and maternal welfare programmes.

A Complete Protein

The protein quality and quantity in quinoa seed is often superior and higher compared to other common cereal grains. It is an excellent source of lysine, which is a limiting amino acid in wheat, maize, rice, etc. Lysine assists in building muscles and in the production of antibodies, hormones, enzymes, collagen and tissue repair. Quinoa is truly a power food. It was said that high in the Andes mountains, Inca warriors of Peru had great stamina and quick recovery by consuming these wonderful, bright seeds!

B Vitamin Pockets

Quinoa is a good source of folate, thiamine, riboflavin and pyridoxine. Folate, vitamin B9, is a vital ingredient to the formation of foetal nervous system and DNA. Thiamine, vitamin B1, assists in glucose metabolism and in proper nerve functioning.

Riboflavin, vitamin B2, is also involved in energy metabolism and in maintaining healthy eyes and skin. Along with iron, riboflavin aids in the production of red blood cells. Pyridoxine, vitamin B6, supports the metabolism of carbohydrates and proteins.

Fibre Bundles

Quinoa is a good source of fibre, both

soluble and insoluble fibre, and provides a sustained feeling of fullness. They bind to toxins and aid in excreting them from the body. Like oats and carrots, the soluble fibre in quinoa plays a major role in reducing the formation of LDL cholesterol!

A Mineral Package

Quinoa is rich in magnesium, manganese, potassium, iron, copper, calcium and phosphorus.

The high level of magnesium helps to relax the blood vessels and reduce the risk of heart disease. It has a higher amount of potassium, compared with other whole grains, which aids in controlling one's blood pressure.

Manganese and copper are co-factors that help the body produce one of the most powerful antioxidants that protect the cells from free radical damage. Quinoa has twice the amount of calcium than whole wheat! Calcium, together with phosphorus, helps maintain healthy bones and teeth.

Quinoa is a good source of iron, essential for the formation of red blood cells that supply oxygen to the body. To enhance the absorption of iron, have quinoa with a food that is a good source of vitamin C—fruits such as orange, kiwi, grapefruit, pineapple and berries. Mangoes and bell peppers are also good sources of vitamin C.



You will find quinoa in two different colours—red and white. They are nutritionally similar, and a rich source of protein.

In addition, red quinoa is packed with anthocyanin, a powerful antioxidant. Cherries, cranberries, blueberries, blackcurrant, plums, skin of grapes, kidney beans, black beans, red cabbage and egg plant are among the other few good sources of anthocyanin, a pigment that gives beautiful colour to these fruit and vegetables.

Quinoa is the most preferred and favoured ingredient in granola, bread, and crackers. Quinoa pasta is also highly enjoyed by those who follow a gluten-free diet.

It is easy to prepare Quinoa and it can be incorporated into many recipes including soups, salads, vegetable dishes, burgers and desserts. Quinoa is also easily digested and an excellent source of nutrition for infants and kids, so do try to get them keen on quinoa!



References
<http://wholegrainscouncil.org/>
<http://www.celiaccentral.org/>
<http://www.hpb.gov.sg/>
<http://www.mayoclinic.org/>

Quinoa Mango Salad

Ingredients

100 g, cooked quinoa
 1 tbsp chopped celery leaves/ cilantro (coriander leaves)
 4 spring onions,
 1 Mango (200g), peeled
 1 tbsp olive oil
 1 tsp ground pepper
 1/2 lemon

How to make it

Combine all ingredients in a bowl and mix together. Serve with grilled chicken or baked salmon



QUICK FACTS

Nutritional content of quinoa:

According to CalorieCount, one-third cup of cooked quinoa has
 160 calories,
 2.5 grams of fat
 3 grams of fibre
 6 grams of protein

Cooking quinoa:

Prepare quinoa as you would prepare rice. Cover it with water or vegetable broth and boil until soft, about 15 minutes.

Or, place one part quinoa to two parts water in your rice cooker. Did you know quinoa also makes a great hot breakfast cereal, similar to oatmeal?