

Quinoa Salad with Shiitakes, Fennel and Cashews

Adapted from an L.A. Times 2009 recipe by Amy Scattergood. Voted one of the 10 best recipes of the year.



Other than the good chewy, crunchy texture of the quinoa, the star of this dish is the mushrooms. Don't skimp on them.

- 2 cups quinoa, uncooked
- 1 quart water
- Salt
- 1/4 cup peanut oil
- 5 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 2 cups fennel, thinly sliced
- 2 cups shiitake mushrooms, sliced fresh
- 1 cup sliced green onions, both white and green parts (about 1 small bunch)
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon rice wine vinegar
- 1/2 cup cashews, salted, toasted
- 4 tablespoons minced fresh parsley
- 4 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro
- 4 tablespoons fennel fronds (saved from the fennel bulb you used)

Finely grated zest and juice of 1 lime

Carolyn T's Blog - Tasting Spoons:
<http://tastingspoons.com>

Servings: 8

Use a very fine-meshed sieve (or cheesecloth) to rinse and drain the quinoa - it's so tiny it will go right through any normal strainer. Quinoa is very healthy for us, although it's high in calorie and particularly high in carbohydrates. Serve small portions!

1. In a bowl, rinse the quinoa under cool running water, then drain well with a VERY fine-mesh sieve or cheesecloth-lined strainer (the grains are very small and will slip through a coarse strainer). Heat a wok over medium-high heat and toast the quinoa, shaking the pan frequently, just until the grains dry, are just beginning to color and have a nutty aroma, about 4-8 minutes. Scrape quinoa out into a bowl and set aside.
2. In a medium, lidded pot, bring 1 quart of water to a boil over high heat. Stir in the quinoa with a pinch of salt, then reduce the heat to a simmer and cover. Cook the quinoa until the grains are translucent and tender and the germ has spiraled out from the grain, 12 to 15 minutes (be careful not to overcook). Remove from heat and set aside. Most of the water will have been absorbed, but rather than drain again, just tip pan at an angle and use a spoon to remove any remaining water.
3. Meanwhile, heat the wok again over high heat. Add the peanut oil and heat until it just begins to simmer. Stir in the garlic and fry, stirring constantly, just until the garlic is golden, about 30 seconds (the garlic can burn quickly). Remove the garlic with a slotted spoon, keeping the oil in the pan, and set aside.
4. Add the fennel to the oil and fry, stirring or tossing frequently, until it is caramelized, 5 to 7 minutes. Remove from the oil and set aside. Add the shiitakes to the oil and stir-fry until caramelized, 4 to 5 minutes. Stir the green onions in with the mushrooms and continue to stir-fry just until the green onions begin to wilt, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the soy sauce and vinegar to the mixture and stir or toss to combine, then remove from heat.
5. In a large bowl, gently toss the quinoa with the warm shiitake-green onion mixture, the fennel, garlic, cashews, parsley, cilantro, lime zest and juice. Season to taste with additional salt if desired and serve immediately. (Or, make this ahead, and allow to sit out at room temperature for up to an hour.)

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 467 Calories; 14g Fat (25.6% calories from fat); 13g Protein; 80g Carbohydrate; 11g Dietary Fiber; 0mg Cholesterol; 161mg Sodium. Exchanges: 3 Grain(Starch); 0 Lean Meat; 1/2 Vegetable; 2 Fat; 0 Other Carbohydrates.