

Quinoa with Fresh Asparagus and Tomatoes

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In my not so successful quest to be more healthy (since the very next day I made mac & cheese with bacon), I decided to try making Quinoa since I've read about its benefits so much lately. [Here](#) is a great article. While treated like a grain, it is actually a seed from the Chenopodium or Goosefoot plant related to beets, spinach, Swiss chard, and lamb's quarters and is gluten-free for those who want or need to avoid that. It is cooked similarly to rice (and even better because it doesn't stick to the pan) and can be used to replace grains or pasta in many recipes. It is high in complete protein, calcium and iron and has all 8 essential amino acids. Although I used chicken broth, and parmesan cheese you could easily use water or vegetable broth and leave out the cheese if you prefer vegetarian or vegan.

It was good, and I will definitely make it again. I thought it was interesting, especially the little "tails" that when cooked have a little crunch (you can see them in the picture). It kind of reminded me of the way corn pops, but the little parts are not nearly as hard as a popped corn shell, barely crunchy. It is basically pretty bland alone, so you need to add lots of flavor. This is really quick to make, less than 1/2 hour and you can serve it hot or cold as a salad.

Ingredients for 4 servings:

2 cups quinoa

3 cups chicken broth, water or vegetable broth

3 Tablespoons Olive Oil

1 lb grape tomatoes

1 lb asparagus spears cut into 1 inch pieces

3 cloves of garlic minced (I like a lot so you can cut that down if you prefer)

2 Tablespoons fresh basil (or 1 T dried)

2 Tablespoons fresh oregano (or 1 T dried)

1/2 cup shredded parmesan cheese (optional)

Procedure:

First rinse the quinoa well using a very fine strainer or cheesecloth. Although some brands are pre-rinsed, this is important not to skip as otherwise you could end up with a bitter taste.

Add the quinoa and broth to a large saucepan over medium heat up to a simmer, then lower the heat and maintain the simmer for about 15 minutes.



Asparagus and Grape Tomatoes

In a large skillet, add the olive oil and sauté over medium high heat for about 5 minutes, just until the asparagus is cooked but still crisp and most of the tomatoes are still intact. If the tomatoes start to break apart it is done. Add the minced garlic and cook for another 30 seconds. When the quinoa is cooked, add it to the vegetables, along with the basil and oregano and the shredded parmesan.