

NSW CWA Product of the week - Quinoa

Quinoa (pronounced 'keen-wah') sits within the 'pseudo-cereal' group as it is not part of the Poaceae botanical family, in which 'true' grains belong. It is nutritionally similar and used in similar ways to 'true' grains.

Quinoa originates from the Andes, where it has been cultivated by the Inca people for centuries. The grain is small, and is typically a light-coloured round grain (but is also available in other colours including red, purple and black), that is similar in appearance to sesame seeds.

Its bitter residue of saponins, a naturally occurring plant defence, assists in warding off insects and birds. Before cooking quinoa seeds, thoroughly rinse them under running water to remove any trace of saponins.

Quinoa can be used for cooking as grain, flour or flakes and is found in a range of products including breads, breakfast cereals, pasta and other grain-based foods.

Quinoa has a number of nutritional benefits including:

- Rich in carbohydrates, with a low glycemic index of 53.
- High protein content (15%), providing all essential amino acids, including lysine.
- Relatively low in fat, most of which is omega-6 polyunsaturated fat.
- Provides notable quantities of, magnesium, iron, copper, phosphorus and potassium.
- Contains high amounts of Vitamin E and B-group vitamins.
- High in dietary fibre.
- Contains polyphenols, phytosterols and flavonoids.
- Gluten free.

Recipe: French style lentil and quinoa salad

Serves: 6 as a side dish

Preparation time: 40 minutes

Ingredients

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup French style lentils

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup quinoa

1 red apple, quartered, cored and sliced finely

1 Lebanese cucumber, sliced finely length wise

3 celery stalks, sliced finely

5 spring onions, sliced finely

Method

1. Place lentils and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of water into a saucepan and bring to the boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes. Drain and set aside to cool.

2. Meanwhile, add quinoa and 1 cup of water into a small saucepan. Bring to the boil then reduce heat to low. Cover and cook for 10 – 12 minutes or until stock is absorbed and quinoa is tender. Fluff with a fork and set aside to cool.
3. To prepare dressing, place all ingredients in a small bowl and whisk to combine.
4. In a serving bowl, combine cooked and well drained lentils and quinoa with apple, cucumber, celery and spring onions. Pour over dressing and mix well.

Source: Grains Legume and Nutrition Council.