

# Quinoa is Queen

Author: **Jacqueline Church**  
Published: **January 4, 2007**

**Quinoa has more calcium and protein than a quart of milk. It contains as much protein as meat. It's high in iron, magnesium and potassium. And, it tastes great.**

**Quinoa** ("Keen-wah") delivers light, nutty flavor, cooks in 15 minutes and delivers all its nutritional wallop with none of the fat or calories of animal protein.

With more calcium and protein than a quart of milk, Quinoa delivers significant amounts of 20 different amino acids your body uses to maintain and repair tissues. These are protein building blocks your body can't make and has to get from food. It's high in iron, magnesium and potassium.

Even among grains, Quinoa reigns supreme in the protein department: an average of 16.2 percent, compared with 7.5 percent for rice, 9.9 percent for millet, and 14 percent for wheat. Some varieties of quinoa are more than 20 percent protein.

But what about taste? **Quinoa** has a lovely nutty flavor that is more pronounced than say, cous-cous and can be used for salads as well as side dishes. It can also be used as a morning cereal in place of oatmeal. Try it with almonds, dried cherries for a nice alternative.

**Quinoa** is one of the ancient grains being rediscovered by chefs today. Once a staple of the Incas, it was so central to their diet that the invading Spaniards tried to burn all the fields. Lucky for us, enough of the crops survived. Now, it may in turn yield delicious secrets for our survival.

I've decided to add whole grains to my diet this year. I'm making S.M.A.R.T. goals not silly resolutions. One of these **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**easonable, and **T**ime-bound goals is - *to try one whole grain dish each week*. I'll also try to add one new dish every two weeks to our meals at home. See my [Resolutions for Gourmets](http://gourmetfood.suite101.com/blog.cfm/resolutions_for_gourmets) - ( [http://gourmetfood.suite101.com/blog.cfm/resolutions\\_for\\_gourmets](http://gourmetfood.suite101.com/blog.cfm/resolutions_for_gourmets) ) for more on these.

## **Benefits of eating whole grains like Quinoa include:**

- Reducing risk of chronic disease
- Maintaining healthy cholesterol
- Promoting heart health
- Promoting proper bowel function
- Providing long-lasting feeling of satiety (feeling "full") which can help you avoid over-eating
- Lower glycemic index means steadier blood sugar levels which can help you decrease diabetes risk, or at least avoid the spikes and drops in blood sugar that cause cravings and over-eating.
- Researchers also shows three or more servings daily could reduce insulin resistance and metabolic syndrome, two precursors to type 2 diabetes.

## **Other grains you should get to know**

**Barley** – Barley contains beta-glucans which are a specific type of fiber known to reduce levels of cholesterol and triglycerides. One of the easiest ways to incorporate barley is in soup. Beef, mushroom or totally vegetarian soups all taste great with the addition of barley.

**Farro** – Another name for Farro is Spelt. Farro is an old cousin to our more familiar wheat. It was a favorite of Ancient Romans and has a nutty texture and flavor. It can be added to soup like barley, and made in side dishes with roasted vegetables.

**Buckwheat** – This is the same grain that gives soba noodles their brown color and their nutty flavor. Kasha is the Eastern European name for it. French have used it in crepes and Russians in blini. You may know it as the grain in Tabouleh. One of the best things about Buckwheat is its dose of rutin which is a powerful antioxidant and may prevent arterial plaques from forming. Buckwheat is easy to incorporate into meatloaf or meatballs.

**Wild Rice** – Really a grain that packs protein and crunch as well as drama. One of my favorite restaurants makes a rice salad containing wild rice, almonds, and kernels of sweet corn. Mixing rices is easy with store-bought blends such as Lundberg Farms blends available here in the US in Whole Foods markets.