

Fresh From the Kitchen

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Roasted Quinoa with Potatoes and Cheese

Makes: 4 to 6 servings

Time: 1 hour

When you boil quinoa for a couple of minutes, then roast it in oil, it develops a crispness that's almost like nuts. Here the crisp-roasted quinoa almost coats the potatoes, and you finish the whole thing off with melted cheese.

If you can find purple potatoes, use them here. With a simple green salad – and in summer, sliced ripe tomatoes – this is a perfect lunch or light supper. With scrambled eggs, warm tortillas, and salsa, it's weekend breakfast. Add any good bean dish and you have a satisfying dinner.

Other grains you can use: amaranth, fine bulgur (#1).

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

1 pound small waxy potatoes, like fingerling, new red, or Peruvian purple, peeled if you like and cut lengthwise into wedges.

3 to 4 cloves garlic, peeled

Salt

3/4 cup quinoa

Freshly ground black pepper

1/2 cup sliced scallion

1 medium red bell pepper, cored, seeded, and chopped

1 or 2 tablespoons minced fresh chile (like jalapeno or Thai), or to taste, or hot red pepper flakes or cayenne to taste

6 ounces cheese, preferably smoked, like cheddar, Gouda, or mozzarella, grated (about 1-1/2 cups)

1/4 cup minced parsley for garnish

(1) Preheat the oven to 400°F. Grease an 8 x 10-inch roasting pan with a tablespoon or so of the olive oil.

(2) Put the potato wedges and garlic in a large pot with water to cover, salt it, and turn the heat to high. When the water begins to boil, stir in the quinoa. Adjust the heat so that the water boils assertively and cook, stirring once or twice, for about 5 minutes.

Roasted Quinoa with Potatoes and Cheese, (continued)

(3) Drain the quinoa, garlic, and potatoes in a strainer, but leave them fairly wet. Spread them into the prepared pan, sprinkle with salt and pepper, drizzle with the remaining olive oil, and gently toss with a spatula. Spread them out again. Roast, undisturbed, for 15 minutes. Gently toss again, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom of the pan, and return the pan to the oven for another 10 minutes or so, until the potatoes are tender on the inside and golden on the outside.

(4) Add the scallion, bell pepper, and chile and toss everything one last time. Taste and adjust the seasoning, keeping in mind that the cheese will add some saltiness. Spread the cheese over all and return to the oven for another 5 to 8 minutes, until the cheese is melted and bubbling. Sprinkle with parsley and serve.