

Easy Quinoa Salad: Fresh, Healthy & Flavorful Lemon Herb Delight

Easy Quinoa Salad: Your Go-To for Fresh, Healthy, and Flavorful Meals!



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15 min

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INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup uncooked quinoa (white, red, or tricolor)
- 2 cups water (for cooking quinoa)
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 cucumber, diced (English or Persian cucumber recommended)
- 1/4 red onion, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint (optional, but highly recommended for brightness)
- 1/4 cup crumbled feta cheese (optional, for a salty tang)
- Salt and pepper to taste (for the finished salad)
- 1/4 cup olive oil (extra virgin, good quality)
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest (freshly grated)
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- Salt and black pepper to taste (for the dressing)

Swaps and Notes:

Quinoa: Any color of quinoa will work. Ensure it's well-rinsed before cooking.

Veggies: Feel free to add other fresh vegetables like bell peppers (diced), corn kernels (fresh or frozen/thawed), or even blanched green beans.

Herbs: Fresh parsley is a must. Mint adds a lovely refreshing touch, but can be omitted if not preferred. Fresh dill would also be nice.

Feta Cheese: Adds a salty, briny kick. Can be omitted for a dairy-free/vegan salad.

Lemon Dressing: Freshly squeezed lemon juice and zest are crucial for the bright flavor. Dijon mustard helps emulsify the dressing and adds a subtle tang.

Garlic: Freshly minced garlic provides the best flavor for the dressing.

Directions:

Rinse Quinoa: Rinse the quinoa in a fine mesh strainer under cold water for a minute or two until the water runs clear. This removes saponins, which can make quinoa taste bitter.

Cook Quinoa: Combine the rinsed quinoa and 2 cups of water in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil over high heat, then immediately reduce the heat to low, cover the pot tightly, and simmer for 15 minutes, or until all the water is absorbed and the quinoa is tender and fluffy. Remove from heat, fluff with a fork, and let it cool completely. You can spread it on a baking sheet to speed up cooling.

Combine Salad Ingredients: In a large mixing bowl, combine the cooled quinoa with the halved cherry tomatoes, diced cucumber, finely chopped red onion, chopped fresh parsley, and chopped fresh mint (if using). If using, add the crumbled feta cheese now.

Whisk Dressing: In a separate small bowl or a jar with a tight-fitting lid, whisk together all the dressing ingredients: olive oil, fresh lemon juice, lemon zest, Dijon mustard, minced garlic, salt, and black pepper. Whisk vigorously (or shake the jar) until the dressing is well combined and emulsified.

Dress & Toss: Pour the dressing generously over the salad ingredients in the large bowl. Toss gently but thoroughly to combine everything well, ensuring all the ingredients are evenly coated with the flavorful dressing. Adjust salt and pepper to taste in the finished salad.

Chill & Serve: Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and chill the salad in the refrigerator for at least 20-30 minutes before serving for best flavor. This allows all the flavors to meld and deepen. Serve chilled.

Tips for Success:

Rinse Quinoa: Don't skip rinsing the quinoa; it removes the bitter saponin coating.

Fluff and Cool Quinoa: Fluffing with a fork after cooking and allowing it to cool prevents mushiness and allows it to absorb the dressing better.

Fresh Ingredients: The success of this salad relies on fresh, vibrant vegetables and herbs.

Finely Chop Red Onion: A finely chopped red onion provides flavor without being overpowering.

Adjust Dressing: Taste the dressing before adding it to the salad and adjust the sweetness (a tiny

pinch of honey if needed), tartness, or saltiness to your preference.

DIRECTIONS

1. Making this : Easy Quinoa Salad is straightforward, with simple steps for cooking the quinoa and assembling the fresh ingredients!
2. Rinse : Quinoa: Rinse the quinoa in a fine mesh strainer under cold water for a minute or two until the water runs clear. This removes saponins, which can make quinoa taste bitter.
3. Cook : Quinoa: Combine the rinsed quinoa and 2 cups of water in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil over high heat, then immediately reduce the heat to low, cover the pot tightly, and simmer for 15 minutes, or until all the water is absorbed and the quinoa is tender and fluffy. Remove from heat, fluff with a fork, and let it cool completely. You can spread it on a baking sheet to speed up cooling.
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8. **Tips for Success: Rinse Quinoa:** Don't skip rinsing the quinoa; it removes the bitter saponin coating.
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11. **Finely : Chop Red Onion:** A finely chopped red onion provides flavor without being overpowering.
12. **Adjust : Dressing:** Taste the dressing before adding it to the salad and adjust the sweetness (a tiny pinch of honey if needed), tartness, or saltiness to your preference.
13. **Chill : Time:** The chilling time is crucial for the flavors to meld beautifully.
14. **Serving Suggestions and Pairings:** This Easy Quinoa Salad is incredibly versatile! It's perfect as a:
15. **Healthy : Lunch:** Enjoy it on its own for a light and satisfying meal.
16. **Side : Dish:** Fantastic alongside grilled chicken (like my Hawaiian Teriyaki Chicken), fish, or steak.
17. **Meal : Prep:** Make a big batch at the beginning of the week for quick and healthy lunches.
18. **Potluck/ Picnic:** It holds up well for outdoor gatherings.
19. **Mediterranean : Platter:** Serve alongside hummus, pita bread, and other fresh veggies (like my Blistered Shishito Peppers).
20. **For other vibrant and healthy salads,** you might also enjoy my [A Light, Tangy Chicken Salad I Actually Crave](#) (and [There's No Mayo in Sight!](#)) or my colorful [Best Cowboy Caviar](#).
21. **Storage and Leftover Tips:** Store any leftover Easy Quinoa Salad in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3-4 days. The flavors will continue to meld and develop. If it seems a little dry after a day or two, you can refresh it with a tiny drizzle of olive oil and a squeeze of fresh lemon juice.
22. **More Recipes You Will Love:** If you loved the fresh, healthy, and easy nature of this quinoa salad, here are a few more fantastic savory recipes that I think you'll absolutely love:
23. For another vibrant, no-cook dip with fresh veggies, check out my [Mediterranean Garden Layer Dip](#).
24. If you're a fan of quick and tasty veggie snacks, my [Vegan Sweet Chili Edamame](#) are a must-try.
25. And for a fresh, light, and tangy chicken salad that's perfect for summer lunches, don't miss my [A Light, Tangy Chicken Salad I Actually Crave](#) (and [There's No Mayo in Sight!](#)).

SWAPS & NOTES

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Ensure it's well-rinsed before cooking.

Veggies: Feel free to add other fresh vegetables like bell peppers (diced), corn kernels (fresh or frozen/thawed), or even blanched green beans.

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More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/easy-quinoa-salad-fresh-healthy-flavorful-lemon-herb-delight/>