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Moist and flavorful quinoa cakes fit the veggie burger bill

By Susie Iventosch



Quinoa Cakes Photo Susie Iventosch

In July, my daughter, Courtney, and I were in Vermont to be the camp "chefs" for an adventure cycling tour. We somehow managed to cook breakfast and dinner for 24 hungry riders . in campgrounds! Let me just say, that was probably the hardest either of us had ever worked in our lives, but we met great people and we loved Vermont. It was so gloriously green and beautiful.

There's a good reason why they call their mountains the Green Mountains!

Anyway, before the tour began, we treated ourselves to dinner at The Farmhouse Tap & Grill in Burlington, and one of our favorite dishes was their Crispy Quinoa Cakes, made with corn and zucchini in addition to quinoa and who knows what else. They were absolutely delicious and it reminded me that I've been wanting to create my own veggie burger, because the packaged ones don't always fill the bill. So, this week, I set about creating this recipe and am so happy with the

results.

I wanted something that had a crispy edge, but stayed moist in the middle and had plenty of spice. I didn't want to use oats, but rather quinoa, which has some protein, and we added toasted walnuts, flax meal and millet - all delicious and healthy ingredients. You could certainly add grilled corn or sautéed spinach or even zucchini for your own variation. We made these burger size for dinner, but then the next day I made the rest of the mixture into little cakes for a side dish. They are tasty enough to serve all by themselves, but a creamy avocado-cilantro-lime dipping sauce never hurt anyone!

INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons olive oil
 2 shallots, finely chopped
 1 clove garlic, minced
 3/4 cup cooked quinoa (any color you like)
 2 tablespoons raw millet
 1 15-oz.can garbanzo or black beans (I used garbanzo)
 1-2 tablespoons water (just for consistency and to help purée the beans.)
 1/2 cup toasted, chopped walnuts (you can sub pecans if you prefer)
 4 tablespoons flax meal, divided
 1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
 1/2 teaspoon powdered cumin
 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
 1/2 teaspoon paprika
 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
 1 teaspoon lemon pepper
 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
 1 tablespoon tahini (optional)

DIRECTIONS

Cook quinoa according to the directions. Cool to room temperature.

Heat olive oil in a sauté pan and add shallots and garlic. Cook over medium-low heat, until translucent and beginning to brown. Set aside. Don't clean the pan, because you can use this same pan to cook the quinoa cakes!

Purée garbanzo beans (or black beans) in the bowl of your food processor until mostly smooth. A few chunks is okay, and even good! This is where you may need to add some water to get the beans to process well.

Spoon the puréed beans into a mixing bowl and add the quinoa, millet, caramelized shallots and garlic, walnuts, Worcestershire, 2 tablespoons of the flax meal, and all of the herbs and spices. If you like tahini, add it at this time, too. (Be careful not to add too much to make the mixture too thin.) Mix all ingredients thoroughly and divide into 4 large burger-sized patties, or 8 small appetizer-sized cakes.

Sprinkle the remaining flax meal on a plate and coat the tops and bottoms of each patty, gently pressing the flax meal into the patty. This gives the quinoa cakes a nice crunchy texture.

Heat a little bit of olive oil in the frying pan that you used for the shallots over medium heat. Place the quinoa cakes in the pan and cook over medium-high heat to brown both sides of the patties. Reduce heat to low and continue to cook for another 10 minutes or so, until the quinoa cakes are heated all the way

through.

Serve with a bun and all of your favorite burger fixings if you are making these as veggie burgers, or if you plan to serve the smaller quinoa cakes as a side dish or appetizer, you might want to serve them with a creamy cilantro avocado sauce. (Avocado, cilantro, garlic, plain nonfat Greek yogurt, lime juice plus your favorite hot sauce.)



Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>

Reach the reporter at: suziven@gmail.com

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