

Moist and flavorful quinoa cakes fit the veggie burger bill



Quinoa Cakes

Photo Susie Iventosch

By 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>



Family Focus

Toxic Relationships

By Margie Ryerson, MFT

“Toxic relationships not only make us unhappy; they corrupt our attitudes and dispositions in ways that undermine healthier relationships and prevent us from realizing how much better things can be.” ~ Michael Josephson

Emotionally healthy people don't set out to have a toxic relationship with anyone. Often, they become unwittingly ensnared in one and are unsure how to proceed. For those who hang on, hoping the relationship will improve, it is highly likely that they will experience ongoing distress. But many of us are loyal individuals who value the people in our lives and don't feel comfortable making radical changes.

There are many ways a relationship can be toxic; physical, emotional, and sexual abuse are widely recognized as indicators. Some behaviors don't qualify as full-fledged abuse, but still make for toxic relationships. If you are on the receiving end of bullying, manipulation, lying, gossiping about you to others, deception, general untrustworthiness, disregard for your time, money and/or feelings, or ultra-competitiveness with you, you may be in a toxic relationship.

Kristin, age 48, was working on managing her depression and anxiety in our therapy sessions. In the course of

examining her relationships, she became more aware of how hurt and upset she was that her relationship with one of her closest friends felt so one-sided. Kristin considered all the ways she was there for her friend, Natalie. She felt that she was always interested in Natalie's life, was generous with her time and money, and, overall, was a considerate friend. However, Natalie rarely reached out to Kristin unless she needed something. When they talked, the conversation usually seemed to revolve around Natalie. Most hurtful were the times Kristin heard that Natalie had invited others to her vacation home and hadn't included her. As a matter of fact, Kristin had never even been to Natalie's vacation home.

Our healthy relationships produce positive feelings about ourselves. We feel valued and seen. These relationships enhance our lives. When we're in a relationship that pulls us down to a negative place where we question ourselves and our worth and feel hurt and neglected, we need to stop and take stock.

Kristin was already putting in a huge effort in her friendship with Natalie. The only missing element was telling Natalie how she felt. However, Kristin knew that Natalie's actions spoke loud and clear, and that her preoccupation with herself was firmly established. There seemed to be nothing that Kristin could ask Natalie to

change that would help her feel better. After all, suggesting that she be invited to Natalie's vacation home wasn't an option. Kristin would never invite herself to someone's house or event, and besides, there was nothing that would compensate for Natalie's failure to invite her over the past years. Kristin was able to see that Natalie's treatment of her was overall inconsiderate and neglectful.

Kristin's choices were to continue the relationship as usual, to abandon it altogether, or to scale it down in her mind to a more superficial relationship. Because she lived in the same community as Natalie, Kristin decided to demote the relationship in her mind. She could still be friendly with Natalie, but she wouldn't consider her a good friend. In this way, she took more control and was able to avoid becoming so hurt and vulnerable.

We usually want to be able to speak up and ask what we would like from others in an appropriate way. Being assertive is difficult at times, but can be positive and rewarding. But if you are in a relationship with a toxic person, your feelings and perspectives will rarely be acknowledged or accommodated; the other person's version will take precedence. In extreme cases, the toxic person will gaslight you – feed you lies and distort your perception of events over time – and cause you to doubt yourself and your judgment.

Once you have evaluated and recognized the nature of a toxic relationship in your life, it is important to take steps to protect yourself.

Ben, aged 34, was a kind and loving member of his blended family. Both of his divorced parents had remarried several times, and Ben prided himself on getting along with all of his various siblings, half-siblings, and step-siblings. However, Ben had one half-sister, Helene, who was a particular challenge. Helene was a single mom of a 3-year-old son, Chad, and regularly accused Ben of not being a caring brother and uncle. In reality, Ben knew that he often made an effort to spend time with Helene and Chad, and would treat them to meals and toys for Chad. He also knew that Helene was the one who didn't think of others, but mostly what others could do for her.

Their relationship gradually deteriorated as Ben became increasingly resentful of Helene's demands and lack of appreciation. But when Helene got angry at Ben for not inviting her son to participate in his wedding, even though only nieces and nephews ages 5 and up were participating, Ben decided that he'd had enough. He told Helene that if she couldn't control her anger and treat him better, he didn't want to see her for a while. He needed a break. Helene became furious and lashed out at Ben, cursing him and insulting him. Her behavior

only confirmed his decision to distance himself from her as much as possible. Months later, Ben reported feeling only relief – and no guilt. Removing a toxic person from our lives can feel liberating and restorative.

A person may be toxic for one person, but not for others. Therefore, it is hard to get support for one's feelings if others haven't experienced the same behaviors from an individual. And each of us reacts differently. Whereas one person may perceive that he or she is being treated inexcusably poorly, another person may overlook the same treatment. It is up to each of us to decide for ourselves what bothers us and how much, if we can speak up and effect change, or if we're better off keeping a distance from certain people.

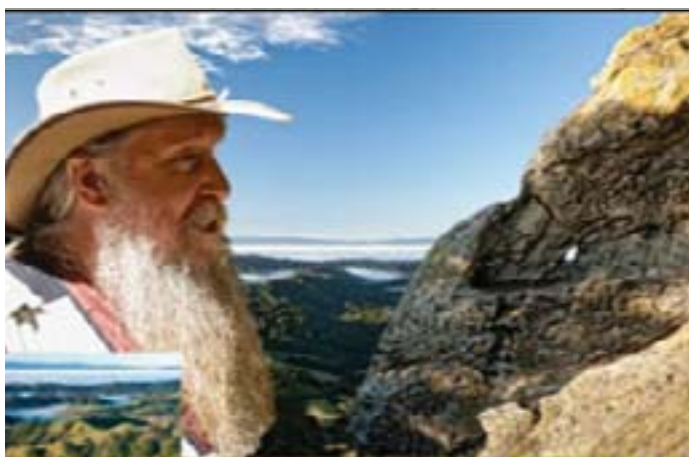


Margie Ryerson, MFT, is a local marriage and family therapist. Contact her at 925-376-9323 or margierye@yahoo.com. Her new book, “Family Focus: A Therapist's Tips for Happier Families,” is available from Orinda Books and Amazon.com.

Lafayette Community Garden celebrates 10 years at open house



Kanyon Sayers-Roods



Jim 'Doc' Hale

Photos provided

Submitted by
Jennifer Russell

The Lafayette Community

Garden and Outdoor Learning Center will celebrate its 10th year with a Community Open House from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Sunday, Sept. 12. The free event will focus on indigenous culture and feature two inspirational speakers – Jim ‘Doc’

Hale and Kanyon Sayers-Roods.

As a Coastanoan Tribal Member, Sayers-Roods' understanding of Indigenous culture promises to captivate and enrich our lives. ‘Doc’ Hale's background in ethnobiology will fascinate listeners as he shares his knowledge of the Saklan way of life.

In addition to the speakers, the event includes guided tours of the garden, information on raising chickens, master gardening and bee keeping, family crafts, edible treats, lavender lemonade, and an opportunity to walk a labyrinth and see the garden's Miwok Village. Members will be on hand to answer garden-

ing questions and show off a variety of gardening methods and practices including hinged covers that prevent critters from eating crops, vermiculture (worm composting), mulching, a butterfly garden, deer resistant plantings and so much more.

Although Contra Costa County Health officials do not require masks for outdoor gatherings, since there might be a large crowd, we suggest that community members wear masks during the open house. Masks and hand sanitizer will be available at the garden.

For information, visit <https://lafayettecommunitygarden.org/>