

*the ultimate*  
**QUINOA**  
STARTER GUIDE



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[www.simplyquinoa.com](http://www.simplyquinoa.com)

# HI THERE!

First, I'd like to thank you for joining the Simply Quinoa community! It's great to have you here and I'm excited to share my passion for living a healthy and happy lifestyle with you (and my love for quinoa, of course!). Before we jump into why quinoa is so great, let's first talk a little bit about Simply Quinoa.

## WHAT IS SIMPLY QUINOA?

I created Simply Quinoa to share my passion for healthy cooking and my love for quinoa, with the goal being for this website to become the go-to resource for all things quinoa. Happily it has become so much more. Simply Quinoa is now a thriving community of food-lovers who embrace their food allergies and sensitivities, are not afraid to venture out of their kitchen comfort zones, and love the positive impact these recipes have on their health and bodies.

## MEET ALYSSA

Hi, I'm Alyssa, the writer, photographer and basically all around everything here at Simply Quinoa. I'm a Vermont girl at heart, but am now living in New York City with my boyfriend Matt and little puppy Trevi (you'll get to know them both through my stories on the blog!).

I went gluten-free over five years ago and that was when I was first introduced to quinoa. I can happily say that it has changed my life! I love cooking and sharing nutrient-rich recipes and inspiring others to live a more nourished life through clean eating. My hope is that you will find inspiration on the blog - in my story, in the recipes and in the comments from the community!



To read more about my story and my personal health journey, please visit my [About Page](#) on the blog!

## ARE ALL OF YOUR RECIPES GLUTEN-FREE?

Yes! Every single one of the recipes on Simply Quinoa is gluten-free. Many of my recipes are also dairy-free and refined sugar-free. If you are sensitive to eggs, I have lots of dishes you can make - just check out my [Vegan Quinoa Recipes Page](#). I also have lots of vegetarian options, nut-free options and many more. I encourage you to poke around the site, explore the recipe section and you'll quickly see there are recipes for everyone!

## CAN I CONTACT YOU WITH A QUESTIONS?

Of course! I love hearing from you and am always here to help. If you have questions or even if you just want to say hello, please don't hesitate to email me anytime:

[alyssa@simplyquinoa.com](mailto:alyssa@simplyquinoa.com)

## HOW DO I FOLLOW SIMPLY QUINOA?

I'm glad you asked! I'd absolutely love for you to come say hello and follow me by clicking the buttons below:



DISCLAIMER: Please note that some of the links in this guide are affiliate links. When you purchase through those links I make a small commission at no extra cost to you. Thank you for your support!

# THE QUINOA BASICS

Now that you know a little bit about me, let's talk quinoa!

## WHAT IS QUINOA?

Quinoa (pronounced keen-wah) is the superfood that has completely revolutionized the way I, and many members of this community, eat. Surprisingly, even though lots of people believe quinoa is a grain, it's actually a seed and is related to beets and spinach. Quinoa. The seed hails from South America (the Peruvian Andes to be specific), and has been touted by health experts for it's miracle nutritional properties.

## WHY IS QUINOA SO GOOD FOR YOU?

There are so many reasons why I love quinoa and promote it as part of your healthy lifestyle! Here are some of the reasons why I think quinoa should be a staple in everyone's pantry:

- It's packed with protein.
- It has all nine essential amino acids.
- It's very high in dietary fibers.
- It's naturally gluten-free.
- It's a complex carbohydrate.
- It's full of vitamins & minerals.

## WHAT DOES QUINOA TASTE LIKE?

For most, quinoa has a slightly nutty taste, but for some it might be slightly bitter or even grass-like. It really depends on your taste buds and you may want to try rinsing your quinoa to help reduce the bitterness.

## DO YOU HAVE TO RINSE YOUR QUINOA?

Well, let's talk about it! I have a whole video discussing rinsing quinoa. I explain why I personally don't rinse my quinoa, but why you might want to. Check it out by clicking the image to the right! And I'd love for you to [subscribe to my channel](#) while you're there!



# HOW TO COOK QUINOA

There are a few different methods for cooking quinoa, but in this guide we're just going to talk about the most popular two. The first is in a small saucepan on the stove top, and the second is in a rice cooker.

## ON THE STOVE TOP

Bring two cups of water and one cup of quinoa to a boil, cover and reduce to simmer for 8 – 12 minutes. The quinoa is done cooking when the water has been absorbed and the germ has separated from the seed.



## IN THE RICE COOKER

Add two cups of water and one cup of quinoa to your cooker and turn it on. The rice cooker should automatically turn off or switch to the "warming" setting when the water has been absorbed and the quinoa is ready.



## COOKING TIP!

Remember, when you're cooking quinoa you just need to make sure that you're using a 2:1 ratio (2 parts water, 1 part quinoa). And know that sometimes different varieties might have slightly varying cooking times!

# THE MANY TYPES OF QUINOA

Quinoa comes in a few different varieties - both in color and the actual form. I talk about them in length in an email you'll get from me soon, but here's a quick snapshot of the type of quinoa you may find at your grocery store (or online). If you are having trouble finding these types in your local store, you can click on the images below and be taken to my favorite online retailers.

## WHITE QUINOA

This is the most common form & it's light, fluffy and mild. It is sold in packages or can be found in bulk.



## RED QUINOA

This has a crunchier texture, but is similar in flavor to white. It is sold in packages or can be found in bulk.



## BLACK QUINOA

Similar to red quinoa but even crunchier. It takes a little longer to cook, but can add drama to your dish. It's easiest to find this online.



## TRI-COLOR QUINOA

This is simply a mixture of all three colors. It has both a soft & crunchy texture. It comes packaged but can also be found in bulk sometimes.



## QUINOA FLAKES

Simply flaked white quinoa. They act similar to oats are great for breakfast or in baking. Find them online or in stores.



## QUINOA FLOUR

Made from grinding white quinoa. It can have a strong flavor, so I recommend that you toast it before using it. Find it online.



## QUINOA PUFFS

Essentially it's the quinoa version of rice crispies. I use them in snacks, granolas and desserts. It's best to purchase them online.

# WHAT'S IN MY PANTRY

It is my belief that the key to eating clean is to make sure that you have healthy options on hand. If your kitchen is filled with junk, then inevitably you'll eat it :) That's okay, but it doesn't lend itself well to staying on track. To help guide you through this process, here's a peek at my top 10 favorite pantry essentials:



**WHITE QUINOA**



**QUINOA FLAKES**



**QUINOA FLOUR**



**COCONUT SUGAR**



**MAPLE SYRUP (B)**



**CHIA SEEDS**



**HEMP SEEDS**



**COCONUT OIL**



**APPLE CIDER VINEGAR**



**ORGANIC BEANS**

# HEALTHY BEGINNER RECIPES

If you're new to quinoa, then you're in luck! I've hand picked my favorite recipes to help you get started. They're all simple in the way they are prepared, are incredibly nutritious AND boast a ton of flavor.

## RECIPE 1 >> [QUINOA PIZZA CRUST](#)

Everyone loves pizza and when you can make that pizza and still stick to your healthy diet? Even better! My quinoa pizza crust is a great place to start because it doesn't even require cooking your quinoa at all (just a little soaking)!

## RECIPE 2 >> [VEGETARIAN QUINOA CHILI](#)

Try adding quinoa to a thick soup or chili in the slow cooker. The quinoa will cook itself (you'll just need a little more water than normal) and it will help give the soup a richer texture and more protein!

## RECIPE 3 >> [QUINOA MAC + CHEESE](#)

Your first recipe with cooked quinoa is another classic recipe, that I've recreated with my healthy quinoa twist. The quinoa is replacing the noodles in this dish, but it's still got all the resemblance of that comforting dish everyone loves.

## RECIPE 4 >> [VEGETARIAN QUINOA STIR FRY](#)

The most common way to use quinoa is in place of rice. Try this healthy vegetarian stir fry and see for yourself! You may never want rice again.

## RECIPE 5 >> [TROPICAL QUINOA LETTUCE WRAPS](#)

Quinoa goes really nicely with cold salads or office lunches. These lettuce wraps combine grilled chicken, quinoa and mango for a flavorful (and healthy!) veggie-packed meal.

## RECIPE 6 >> [QUINOA LUNCH BOWLS](#)

Quinoa bowls are a great foundation to keep in your back pocket. They're totally customizable and in this post I break down how to build one that's not only delicious, but also filled with nutrients.



## **RECIPE 7 >> [SIMPLE BANANA PANCAKES](#)**

Now that you're feeling a little more comfortable with cooked quinoa, let's try some quinoa flakes! These pancakes use just a few ingredients, are made in your blender and are filled with fiber. They're the ultimate weekend breakfast.

## **RECIPE 8 >> [MAPLE PECAN QUINOA BREAKFAST BOWL](#)**

Don't have much time in the morning? Quinoa flakes are perfect! This bowl comes together in under 5 minutes and it will keep you fueled all the way until lunch time. It's a go-to for me!

## **RECIPE 9 >> [ALMOND BUTTER QUINOA BLONDIES](#)**

Now it's time to try quinoa flour! Baking with quinoa flour can be a bit tricky, but this recipe is super simple. It uses almond butter and quinoa flour as the base, and results in ooey, gooey blondies that are delicious (and vegan)!

## **RECIPE 10 >> YOUR TURN TO CHOOSE!**

There are hundreds of recipes on my site for you to choose from next. Whether you want more salads, another breakfast bowl or even a chocolate cookie, there's something for you!

## **[ACCESS THE RECIPE COLLECTION](#)**

# THANK YOU!

Thank you so much for joining our community. I hope you've found this guide helpful and look forward to hearing what recipes you try.



And when you do end up trying a recipe, I would LOVE to see it. Snap a pic and upload it to social media and tag [#simplyquinoa](#) so I can see!

I'm excited to share my healthy living tips + tricks with you.

See you on the inside!

xo Alyssa

