



Quinoa 'n Squash Stuffed Tomatoes

A nutritional powerhouse with a delightful nutty flavor

Grain:

- 1/3 cup red quinoa, washed
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1/2 cup vegetable stock or broth

Tomatoes:

- 1/3 cup chopped onion, chopped
- 2 Tablespoons garlic, minced
- 1/2 cup shredded yellow squash
- 2 Tablespoons golden raisins
- 1 Tablespoon basil pesto
- 3 Tablespoons chopped sun-dried tomatoes
- 1/8 teaspoon smoked bourbon paprika

1 Tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1/8 teaspoon (each) salt; ground black pepper
1 cup shredded fresh baby spinach
6 medium large tomatoes
1/4 cup crushed butter garlic croutons or as needed
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese or as needed
Garnish: minced parsley as desired

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Rinse quinoa in cold water several times before cooking.

Prepare Quinoa: In small saucepan, toss quinoa in 1 Tablespoon olive oil to lightly toast; add Italian seasoning and vegetable stock; bring to a boil. Cover; reduce heat to low/simmer, cook for 15 to 20 minutes until tender and liquid evaporates. Fluff with fork. Remove cooked quinoa from the heat. Set aside.

Prepare Veggie Stuffing: Pour 1 Tablespoon olive oil into nonstick pan; sauté the chopped onions and garlic for 2 minutes; add squash, raisins, pesto, dried tomatoes, paprika, and lemon juice; cook over medium heat for about 2 minutes. Add cooked quinoa; mix to combine ingredients, season with salt and ground black pepper. Stir in baby spinach; remove from heat; set aside to soften in stuffing.

Cut the Tomato Tops: If desired, you can just cut and discard the tops from the tomatoes. To make a fancy star tomato tops, cut a star shape around each tomato stem about 1/4 inch deep. (We used a star cookie cutter as a model.) Remove top; set tomato tops aside for attractive serving.

Removing Seeds and Filling Tomatoes: Carefully, scoop out the seeds of each tomato and some of loose pulp (set aside for another use). Be careful to leave a strong wall of tomato all around. Spoon equal amounts of the quinoa stuffing into cavities of each tomato. The amount you use will depend on the size of your tomatoes. In a small bowl, combine the crushed croutons and grated Parmesan cheese. Spoon over the quinoa filling in each tomato.

Bake Tomatoes: Put tomatoes in a square baking dish; cover with foil; bake in preheated 350 degrees F oven for about 30 minutes. Tomatoes

should be firm and easy to transfer from the baking dish to the serving plates. Serve tomatoes warm; If using star shaped tomato lids, place one-star tomato top on each tomato. Garnish serving platter with minced parsley as desired. Serve warm. Serves: 4 to 6

Cook's Note: The amount of filling you will need depends on the size of your tomatoes. Carefully scoop out the seeds and pulp. I drained and then discarded the pulp/seeds and added the tomato juice to a soup.

About the Recipe: This vegetable inspired dish is packed full of protein. Bursting with vitamins and iron, it was used in the everyday diet of the ancient Incas. The juicy sweet tomatoes are filled with flavor and can be baked quickly in the oven. We like to serve them as an easy-to-make vegetarian supper or side dish. It's so delicious!

Why do you need to rinse quinoa?

While it's best to rinse all grains before cooking, pre-washing is especially advisable for quinoa in order to remove the bitter saponin coating on its outer hull that sometimes remains after processing. To do so, simply run cold water over quinoa in fine-meshed strainer, rubbing the seeds with your fingers. (Avoid soaking quinoa, however, as saponins can leach into the seeds.) After rinsing, place quinoa and water in a covered pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for about 15 minutes, until the grains become translucent and the germ appears as a thin white ring around each grain. Fluff with a fork. For More Information See:

<https://www.drweil.com/diet-nutrition/cooking-cookware/cooking-with-grains-quinoa/>