



# NEWS RELEASE

## Defense Commissary Agency

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## Please your palate with quinoa

*By Lt. Col. Karen E. Hawkins,  
DeCA dietitian*

**FORT LEE, Va.** – Quinoa, known as the “super grain,” is often served in place of rice, potatoes and other real grains. Crunchy, nutty and gluten free, it is a complete protein meaning that it contains all nine essential amino acids. We usually think of quinoa as a grain, but it is actually the seed of a plant that is related to beets, chard and spinach. Quinoa really is a wonder grain for those with gluten intolerance as it makes a good substitute for foods that contain gluten such as wheat. Ever versatile, the super grain offers variety and enhances textures that are often missing when gluten is removed from the diet.

Cooked quinoa seeds have a creamy, crunchy texture along with being fluffy. If toasted before cooking, they have a slightly nutty flavor. While the most popular type of quinoa has a slight yellow color, there are many other different colored varieties.

Along with all the essential amino acids there are many other nutrients that you can get from eating quinoa. It also has essential minerals such as manganese, magnesium, iron, copper and phosphorous. Just one cooked cup of quinoa contains as much calcium as an entire quart of milk, helping to make it a “super food.” So when you are looking for a way to stretch your food dollar a little further, make sure to add this delicious grain to your shopping cart in the commissary, where your savings can average 30 percent or more.

Being a complete protein, quinoa is versatile enough to serve as a main entrée instead of meat, or as a hearty side dish such as Quinoa Taboule.

Serve it up:

- **Combine** cooked, chilled quinoa with your favorite beans, chopped peppers and onions, diced garlic, and a pinch of sea salt. For a Mexican twist add a little salsa to spice it up.
- **Add** nuts and fruit to cooked quinoa as a hot cereal to start the day off with some protein, carbohydrates, calcium and fiber in a bowl.
- **Jazz up** soups and salads with quinoa's nutty flavor and crunchy texture.
- **Grind** quinoa and use the flour in place of some of the regular flour in cookie or muffin recipes.

### **Quinoa Taboule**

2 cups cooked and cooled quinoa

½ cup chopped onions

1 cup chopped Italian parsley

1 teaspoon mint

1 garlic clove, minced

1 tablespoon basil, minced

½ cup fresh lemon juice

¼ cup virgin olive oil

¼ teaspoon sea salt

Toss all the ingredients together in a bowl. Chill for one hour or more. Enjoy! Makes six servings.

For more information about making healthy choices, visit Ask the Dietitian on <http://www.commissaries.com> and post your questions on the DeCA Dietitian Forum. Be sure to look for other useful information in the Dietitian's Voice archive. Sign up with the DeCA Dietitian on [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) and get messages sent to your cell phone today. For delicious recipes, check out Kay's Kitchen. And to enjoy all your commissary has to offer, sign up for the Commissary Connection.

*Nutrition Tip: Adding quinoa to a salad for lunch gives you extra protein and carbohydrate to help you feel full longer and have more energy all afternoon.*

**- DeCA-**

**About DeCA:** *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of*

*commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth about \$3,400 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*