Quinoa Almond Pilaf

*Recipe By:*Ann Kosa

"High-protein side dish with plenty of flavor and crunch. Rinsing the quinoa three times will help to eliminate any bitterness."

Ingredients

* 1/2 cup quinoa, rinsed and drained
* 1 cup cold water
* 1/4 teaspoon salt
* 3 tablespoons olive oil
* 1 celery rib, chopped
* 1 small onion, chopped
* 1 carrot, chopped
* 1 clove garlic, minced
* 8 almonds, coarsely chopped
* 1 small tomato, seeded and chopped
* 2 tablespoons raisins
* 1/8 teaspoon salt
* 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
* 1/8 teaspoon dried thyme
* 1/8 teaspoon dried oregano
* 1 pinch coarse sea salt

Directions

1. Combine quinoa, cold water, and salt in a saucepan; bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium-low, place a cover on the saucepan, and cook until the liquid is fully absorbed, about 15 minutes.
2. Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Cook and stir celery, onion, carrot, and garlic in the hot oil until the onion is translucent, 5 to 7 minutes. Stir almonds, tomato, raisins, salt, pepper, thyme, and oregano into the vegetable mixture; cook and stir 1 minute more.
3. Fluff the quinoa with a fork and stir into the mixture in the skillet; cook and stir until evenly mixed and hot, about 30 seconds.
4. Divide between 3 plates; sprinkle the top of each portion with a scattering of a few coarse sea salt granules for a surprising crunch of salty goodness.

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