

Quinoa Asparagus Salad

Serves 4-6

Ingredients:

1 cup quinoa (dry)

1 1/2 cup water

Pinch salt

1 bunch asparagus, chopped into 1 inch pieces

2 cups shelled fresh English peas (available at Trader Joes) or substitute shelled edamame, radishes, cucumber, snow peas or even spring greens.

3 scallions – thinly sliced at a diagonal

1/2 cup fresh dill (2 x .5 ounces packages) chopped (or sub Italian parsley)

1/2 cup Italian parsley, more to taste.

1/4 cup sliced or slivered almonds, toasted (optional, or sub other nut or seed)

Dressing:

1/3 cup olive oil

Zest from 1 lemon

1/3 cup fresh lemon juice (1-2 lemons)

1/2-1 teaspoon kosher salt

Pepper to taste

Optional garnishes- crumbled goat cheese or feta, sliced avocado, sunflower sprouts or pea shoots, flower petals- chive blossoms are nice.

Instructions:

Rinse the quinoa and place it in a pot with the water and pinch of salt. Bring to a boil, cover, lower heat, and allow it to simmer on low heat for 12-15 minutes. Turn off heat, and let sit covered for 5 -10 minutes, then uncover, fluff with a fork and let it cool.

While the quinoa is cooking, blanch the peas and asparagus in salted boiling water for just a few minutes, until bright and tender. Rinse under cold water.

Place the cooled quinoa and blanched veggies in a bowl. Add the scallions, dill and almonds and give a toss. Add the oil, lemon zest and lemon juice and salt, pepper and stir again.

Taste, adjust salt and lemon, adding more if you like. If you are making this ahead, be sure to taste before serving as flavors will mellow – so I'll usually add a little more salt and lemon.

Serve with optional avocado, feta, goat cheese, sunflower sprouts.

If making this ahead – be sure to taste this right before serving and adjust salt and lemon once more -because quinoa has a tendency to soak up all the flavor! Wait until serving to add any cheese, sprouts or avocado, so salad looks beautiful and fresh.

