

Quinoa Salad with Asparagus, Dates, and Orange



Photo: Becky Luigart-Stayner; Styling: Cindy Barr

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This side dish salad combines several influences: The dates and orange are an Israeli touch; the pecans pay homage to the American South; and the quinoa is a high-protein grain from South America.

Yield:

8 servings (serving size: 3/4 cup)

Ingredients

SALAD:

1 teaspoon olive oil

1/2 cup finely chopped white onion

- 1 cup uncooked quinoa
- 2 cups water
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 cup fresh orange sections (about 1 large orange)
- 1/4 cup chopped pecans, toasted
- 2 tablespoons minced red onion
- 5 dates, pitted and chopped
- 225 gm (2-inch) slices asparagus, steamed and chilled
- 1/2 jalapeño pepper, diced

DRESSING:

- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint
- Mint sprigs (optional)

Preparation

1. To prepare salad, heat 1 teaspoon oil in a large non-stick skillet over medium-high heat. Add white onion to pan; sauté 2 minutes. Add quinoa to pan; sauté 5 minutes. Add 2 cups water and 1/2 teaspoon salt to pan; bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 15 minutes. Remove from heat; let stand 15 minutes or until water is absorbed. Transfer quinoa mixture to a large bowl. Add orange and next 5 ingredients (through jalapeño); toss gently to combine.
2. To prepare dressing, combine juice and next 4 ingredients (through garlic) in a small bowl, stirring with a whisk. Pour dressing over salad; toss gently to coat. Sprinkle with chopped mint. Garnish with mint sprigs, if desired. Serve at room temperature.

