

Fudgy Quinoa Brownies



Quinoa in brownies? Yes! This seed-like grain cooks up in minutes and adds nutty, whole grain flavors to these fudge-like treats. These tiny seeds pack in a lot of brain health nutrition, too: fiber, flavonoids, omega-3 fats, and protein, including all nine essential amino acids. Small bits of quinoa folded into the batter add a pleasantly chewy texture, too.

Quinoa flour amps up the seed's unique flavors in these brownies, but other flours work well, such as almond, hazelnut, white whole wheat, and whole wheat. Extra-virgin olive oil provides brain-friendly fats, and dark chocolate and cacao gives you heart- and brain-healthy flavanols.

Makes 16 2-inch brownies

Ingredients:

⅓ cup dry quinoa (or 1 cup leftover cooked quinoa)
½ teaspoon kosher salt, plus more for cooking the quinoa
2 large eggs
½ cup maple syrup
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
Zest of one orange, ½ teaspoon orange blossom water, or ½ teaspoon orange extract, (optional)
2 tablespoons water
¾ cup quinoa or almond flour
½ cup natural cocoa powder (not Dutch processed)
½ cup dark chocolate chips (I like Guittard extra dark chocolate chips, which are both high in flavanols and low in heavy metals)

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line an 8-x-8-inch baking pan with parchment paper; set aside.

To cook the quinoa, bring a small saucepan of salted water to a boil. Add the quinoa, reduce the heat to a simmer, and cook until plump and the grains sprout a tail, about 12 minutes. Drain and set aside to cool.

Whisk together the eggs, maple syrup, oil, vanilla, orange zest (if using), and 2 tablespoons water in a medium bowl until smooth.

Fold in the quinoa flour, cacao powder, and ½ teaspoon salt until no streaks of flour remain. Set aside 3 tablespoons of the cooked quinoa to top the brownies, then fold the rest into the batter, along with the chocolate chips, stirring until evenly distributed.

BRAIN HEALTH KITCHEN by Annie Fenn, M.D.

Scrape into the prepared pan and smooth over the top with a spoon. Sprinkle the remaining quinoa overtop.

Bake until the center is set and a toothpick placed in the center comes out clean, 22 to 26 minutes.

Cool brownies in the pan for at least 30 minutes. Lift parchment paper and place brownies on a cutting board. Cut into 16 squares.

Tips:

- When cooking quinoa, make extra. It keeps well in the fridge or freezer, ready for impromptu brownie baking and much more.
- White quinoa works best in this recipe.
- Find quinoa flour in the gluten-free baking section of the grocery store, online, and at Bob's Red Mill. Here's a DIY version: toast 1 cup raw white quinoa in a large skillet over medium-low heat until it is a shade darker, and smells like popcorn, about 10 minutes. Be careful to toss well so it doesn't burn. Pour into a powerful blender and pulse until pulverized to the consistency of fine flour, about 2 minutes. Strain through a fine mesh sieve to remove any larger pieces. Store in an airtight container.
- Other flours work well here: almond, hazelnut, white whole wheat, spelt, and whole wheat. I've tried them all in my quest to get these brownies just right.
- I really like these brownies with orange zest or extract, but they are just as good without if that's not your thing.