

Mediterranean Quinoa Salad: A Nutritionist's Daily Favorite

By Rose Lewis • FoxRecipe.com

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In the world of healthy eating, few dishes strike the perfect balance between flavor, convenience, and nutrient density quite like the **Mediterranean Quinoa Salad**. As someone who spends hours in the kitchen experimenting with wholesome ingredients, I always return to this recipe because it fuels the body without the post-lunch energy crash.

Why This Recipe Works

Quinoa is a rare plant-based "complete protein," meaning it contains all nine essential amino acids. When paired with the healthy fats of extra virgin olive oil and the vitamins found in fresh cucumbers and bell peppers, it becomes a powerhouse meal. This salad is naturally gluten-free and can be prepped in bulk for the entire week.

Ingredients

- **1 cup** Quinoa (rinsed thoroughly)
- **2 cups** Water or low-sodium vegetable broth
- **1 large** English cucumber, diced

- **1 cup** Cherry tomatoes, halved
- **1/2 cup** Kalamata olives, pitted and sliced
- **1/4 cup** Red onion, finely minced
- **1/2 cup** Feta cheese, crumbled (optional)
- **Fresh Parsley**, chopped

The Signature Dressing:

- **3 tbsp** Extra virgin olive oil
- **2 tbsp** Fresh lemon juice
- **1 clove** Garlic, minced
- **1 tsp** Dried oregano
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Preparation Steps

1. **Cook the Quinoa:** In a medium saucepan, combine quinoa and water. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer for 15 minutes until water is absorbed. Fluff with a fork and let it cool.
2. **Prep the Veggies:** While the quinoa cools, chop your cucumbers, tomatoes, and onions. The smaller the dice, the better the flavors meld together.
3. **Whisk the Dressing:** In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, garlic, and oregano.
4. **Combine:** In a large mixing bowl, toss the cooled quinoa with the vegetables, olives, and parsley. Pour the dressing over the top and toss gently.
5. **Chill:** For the best flavor, let the salad sit in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes before serving. Add the feta cheese just before serving to maintain its texture.

Cooking Tips from Rose

To give the quinoa a nuttier flavor, try toasting the dry grains in the saucepan for 2 minutes before adding the water. Also, if you are preparing this for a high-protein diet, feel free to add chickpeas or grilled chicken breast on top.