

[IMAGE]

Health for the Ages

By Editorial Staff

With all the processed, fatty, sugar-laden foods the modern food production process continues to deliver, perhaps it's time to go back a few (thousand) years and embrace a tradition of healthier foods – starting with an ancient grain called quinoa. An important crop for the Inca Empire in the 13th century (known as "the mother of all grains" and considered sacred), quinoa is actually a seed – at least that's the part we eat; and is considered a "pseudocereal," not a true grain. Regardless, the health benefits are undeniable. Here are a few to consider:

It's loaded with nutrients: A mere 1 cup of cooked quinoa features 8 grams of protein, 5 grams of fiber, and more than 10 percent of the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) for vitamins B₁, B₂ and B₆, zinc, iron, copper, folate, phosphorus, magnesium and manganese.

It's a complete protein: Everyone knows about the benefits of protein, but few understand the differences in protein quality. Specifically, some protein sources are incomplete (lacking in one or more essential amino acids). Quinoa doesn't have this shortcoming. As a complete protein, quinoa contains all the essential amino acids - a rarity for plant-based foods.

It's low GI: Quinoa's glycemic index (GI) value is only 53, which means it's a low-GI food. That's important because the higher the GI value, the greater its impact on blood sugar. Eat quinoa and you'll be eating a decent amount of carbohydrates, but you'll get slow, sustained energy release that lasts much longer than higher-GI foods.

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