

Lemony Quinoa Kale Salad with Crispy Chickpeas

Prep: 10 minutes • Cook: 20 minutes

A bright, crunchy salad of massaged kale, fluffy quinoa, and crispy chickpeas tossed in a lemon–maple vinaigrette with sun-dried tomatoes, sunflower seeds, and optional goat cheese. Zesty, slightly sweet, and deeply satisfying with layers of texture in every bite.

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup sun-dried tomatoes (chopped (or substitute kalamata olives))
- 1 1/2 cups quinoa (cooked)
- 4 cups kale (loosely packed, chopped)
- 1/4 cup sunflower seeds (roasted, unsalted (preferred))
- 1/4 cup goat cheese (crumbled (optional))
- 1 (15 oz) can chickpeas (drained and rinsed)
- 1 1/2 Tbsp olive oil (or avocado oil (for chickpeas))
- 1/4 tsp sea salt
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 2 cups sturdy bread (day old, torn into ~1-inch pieces (optional croutons; e.g., sourdough; use GF bread or omit if needed))
- 1 tsp avocado oil (or olive oil (for croutons))
- 1 pinch sea salt (for croutons)
- 1 pinch black pepper (for croutons)
- 2-3 Tbsp lemon juice (freshly squeezed)
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1-1 1/2 Tbsp maple syrup
- 1/2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 pinch sea salt (for dressing)
- 1 pinch black pepper (for dressing)

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F (218°C) and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. If using hard/dry sun-dried tomatoes, soak in hot water for 5–10 minutes, then drain. Skip soaking if using soft or oil-packed tomatoes.
3. If you don't already have cooked quinoa, make it: Combine 1/2 cup dry quinoa with 1 cup water in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer, cover, and cook 15–18 minutes until water is absorbed and quinoa is fluffy.

Remove from heat and let rest, covered.

4. Add drained, rinsed, and thoroughly dried chickpeas to the prepared baking sheet (use one side if also making croutons). Toss with 1 1/2 Tbsp oil, 1/4 tsp sea salt, and 1/4 tsp black pepper. Bake 15–20 minutes, until slightly crispy and golden.

5. Optional croutons: Around the 8-minute mark of baking the chickpeas, add torn bread to the other half of the sheet. Toss with 1 tsp oil, a pinch of salt, and a pinch of pepper. Bake 7–10 minutes total, until lightly browned and crusty. Remove pan from oven; chickpeas and croutons will crisp more as they cool.

6. Make the dressing in a large mixing bowl: Whisk together lemon juice, olive oil, maple syrup, Dijon, and a pinch each of salt and pepper. Adjust to taste with more lemon for tartness, maple for sweetness, and salt/pepper as desired.

7. Add chopped kale to the bowl and massage with the dressing for a few minutes to soften and reduce bitterness.

8. Add cooked quinoa, sun-dried tomatoes (or kalamata olives), sunflower seeds, and goat cheese (optional). Toss to combine.

9. Once the chickpeas and croutons have cooled slightly, add them to the salad and toss to distribute. Serve.

10. Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 days. For best crispness, store chickpeas and croutons separately at room temperature until serving.

Tags: Salad, Kale, Quinoa, Chickpeas, Vegan Optional, Gluten-Free Optional
