

Quinoa Shepherd's Pie

Makes two servings.

For the quinoa filling:

- ½ cup red or black quinoa, rinsed
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium carrot, sliced
- 1 stalk celery, sliced
- 1 small onion, roughly chopped
- 1 ginormous garlic clove, chopped
- 1 small tomato, chopped
- Salt & freshly ground pepper to taste
- 1 teaspoon tomato paste
- Ground cinnamon
- About ¼ cup cheese (take your pick—white cheddar, gruyere, comte, etc.), in small cubes

For the top & assembly:

- 1 to 1½ cups mashed potatoes
- ¾ cup shredded cheese, something classy, like gruyere or comte
- Butter, for buttering the casseroles

Sauté the carrots, celery and onions in the olive oil over medium heat, about ten minutes, until they begin to soften a bit. Add the chopped tomato and garlic and sauté about 1 minute more.

Add the quinoa, and stir to blend with the sautéed vegetables. Season with salt and pepper, add about ½ cup water, cover and simmer about 20 minutes.

Uncover, stir in the tomato paste, add a dash of cinnamon, and cook about another minute or so. (If there is still a lot of liquid left, turn up heat and cook a bit longer. The end result should be moist, but not soupy.)

Take the quinoa off the heat, check for salt & pepper. Let cool a bit, then stir in the cubed cheese.

Meanwhile—pre-heat the oven to 375 degrees and butter two small casseroles or soufflés—I use two 550 mL Corningware “grab-its”.

You know the rest—put half the quinoa mixture into each casserole, and top each with half the mashed potatoes. I then use a fork to give the tops a bit of texture. Lastly, top each with half the shredded cheese. Bake until golden, bubbly and a bit browned on top—about 15 – 20 minutes.

Let cool a bit, and enjoy!