

Title:

Almond, Almonds Everywhere

Word Count:

332

Summary:

More people are calling almonds their favorite nut--and they are putting their almonds where their mouths are.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

More people are calling almonds their favorite nut-and they are putting their almonds where their mouths are. Over the past six years, American almond consumption has increased by 11 percent per year.

From roasted and seasoned almonds in creative, portable packaging to almond granola bars, energy bars and breakfast bars to entrees and vegetable dishes, almonds are found in a variety of new food products.

One reason for their popularity may be their health benefits. Studies have shown that almonds as part of a balanced eating plan can lower LDL, or "bad," cholesterol and can help promote a healthy weight. In addition, almonds are packed with the antioxidant vitamin E, magnesium, protein and fiber. They also contain calcium. So, it's no coincidence almonds have become a favorite ingredient and the healthy snack of choice.

Quinoa Salad with Almonds, Feta and Summer Vegetables

Serves: 6

Ingredients:

1 cup quinoa

2 cups low-sodium chicken broth or vegetable broth

3 ounces cubed feta cheese

1/2 cup sliced almonds, roasted*

1/2 pint grape tomatoes, halved

1 small red bell pepper, seeded and diced

1 small zucchini, trimmed and diced

2 scallions, diced

Basil-Chive Vinaigrette

(recipe below)

Instructions:

Place quinoa in a medium pot and rinse with water. Strain out water; add broth and turn heat to high. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer uncovered until liquid is absorbed, about 15 minutes. Cool and toss gently with feta, almonds, vegetables and vinaigrette. Serve.

Basil-Chive Vinaigrette:

2 tablespoons white wine vinegar

Juice of 1/2 lime

1/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

2 tablespoons minced fresh chives

1 tablespoon minced fresh basil

Salt and pepper

Combine vinegar and lime juice in a small bowl. Gradually whisk in olive oil until mixture is smooth and uniform. Stir in chives and basil. Season with salt

and pepper to taste.

*To roast sliced almonds, spread in an ungreased baking pan. Place in a 350°F oven and bake 10 minutes or until golden brown and fragrant; stir once or twice to ensure even browning. Note that almonds will continue to roast slightly after removing from oven.