



USOC
SPORTS NUTRITION

Weekly Recipe:

Blackened Chicken and Cilantro Lime Quinoa

Dressing up basic chicken and quinoa can keep a standard meal from becoming mundane. Try this blackened chicken with an avocado cream sauce for a spicy alternative. The lime juice and cilantro in the quinoa adds a zesty flavor which compliments the blend of spices used to season the chicken. If you have access to a grill you could quickly grill your chicken instead of cooking the chicken in a pan or skillet. The quinoa for this recipe cooks in about 20 minutes, making it a great weeknight meal. Complete this simple meal by pairing it with a side salad or cooked vegetables, or both! Use this recipe as a jumping off point for your team's next barbeque or turn the leftovers into a cold salad as a sandwich alternative.

Ingredients:

Yield: 4 servings

Blackened Chicken and Quinoa

2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (~1 pound)
McCormick Grill Mates Cinnamon Chipotle Rub (available at Vons)
1 tsp. olive oil
2 cups low-sodium chicken stock
1 cup quinoa
Juice and zest of 1 lime
Dash of salt and pepper
2 Tbsp. cilantro, chopped

Avocado Cream Sauce

1 avocado
2 Tbsp. plain, non-fat Greek yogurt

Directions:

1. Prepare quinoa using package instructions, substitute chicken stock for water.
2. In a bowl, season both sides of each chicken breast with the Grill Mates seasoning.
3. Add a teaspoon of olive oil to a large pan or skillet. Heat the olive oil for a minute over medium/high heat. Add the chicken breasts to the pan. Cook for seven minutes on each side with the lid on.
4. After the chicken breasts have cooked all the way through, remove them from the pan and let them rest for seven minutes before slicing them.
5. Add the warm quinoa to a large bowl. Toss in the lime zest, lime juice, salt and pepper, and chopped cilantro. Mix to combine.
6. Serve the sliced chicken breast on top of the quinoa. If you find the blackened seasoning too spicy, you can add a quick and easy avocado cream sauce to cool it down. Just place the flesh from one avocado along with two tablespoons of Greek yogurt in a food processor or blender and puree until smooth.

***To make your own rub:** combine all dry seasoning ingredients in a bowl and mix-
½ teaspoon paprika, ¼ teaspoon salt, ¼ teaspoon pepper, ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper, ¼ teaspoon onion powder, & ¼ teaspoon cumin

Blackened Chicken & Cilantro Lime Quinoa (with Avocado Cream Sauce)

Amount	1 serving (~1/4 of total)
Calories	300 (360)
Fat (g)	7 (12)
Sat. Fat (g)	1 (1.5)
Carb. (g)	28 (31)
Fiber (g)	3 (6)
Protein (g)	31 (32)
Gluten free.	



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While we have already touted the performance and health benefits of quinoa many times (high in protein and fiber) we would like to focus now on the chicken. Often overlooked or taken for granted as a “healthy food” chicken has a lot more to offer than just being a great source of protein. Although, with respect to protein, one 4-ounce serving of chicken breast provides about 35 grams of protein, or the amount recommended for a 150-pound athlete to meet his/her post-exercise protein needs.

All of the B vitamins are present in chicken meat, including B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, B12, folate, biotin, and choline. Chicken is a particularly helpful food for obtaining vitamin B3, niacin, a heart healthy vitamin as it provides about 77% of the Daily Value (DV) per serving and ranks as an excellent source of this B vitamin. In terms of minerals, chicken is richest in selenium and provides about 45% of the DV in a single 4-ounce serving. Zinc, copper, phosphorus, magnesium, and iron are also provided by this food. These minerals are essential for muscle recovery and energy metabolism.

Tryptophan, an essential amino acid supplied by chicken, helps with regulating sleep, appetite, and mood- all essential for a good training session!