



Potluck Secret Weapon

Summer isn't even halfway over, and I'm already getting bored with my go-to picnic and potluck dishes, cole slaw or potato salad. Any ideas?

A Try my summertime potluck secret weapon: quinoa! Quinoa is actually a seed (not a grain), which means it's full of protein and carbs, making it a hearty side or main dish. Since it's temperature-stable, you don't have to worry about it sitting out at a picnic. I like to make up a huge batch of plain quinoa and keep it in my fridge. Then I scoop out a cup or two for recipes all week. A few picnic-perfect ideas:

- Toss cooked quinoa with chopped raw or roasted veggies and a Dijon mustard vinaigrette, then top with toasted slivered almonds.
- Mix cooked quinoa with halved cherry tomatoes, cubed mozzarella, fresh basil cut into ribbons and Italian dressing.
- Peel and roast halved peaches, plums or pears in a 375°F oven for 15 to 20 minutes. Layer the fruit with cooked quinoa, lightly sweetened ricotta cheese or Greek yogurt and a sprinkle of cinnamon, then drizzle with honey or maple syrup for individual trifles.

Melissa d'Arabian is a Food Network host, best-selling author and mother of four. Her latest cookbook Supermarket Healthy is available now. Ask her a question about back-to-school strategies at relish@athlonmediagroup.com.