

Cruciferous

by Joy Manning

Charred Corn and Quinoa Salad

Makes 2 quarts

Years ago, I read in a Rick Bayless cookbook that in Mexico, vegetables are often cooked on a ripping hot, bone-dry piece of cast iron cookware called a comal. Now, whenever I make anything even slightly inspired by Mexico I tend to char the vegetables this way.

It just happens to be a way of cooking without oil. In plant-based communities, many people advocate for cooking without oil for health reasons. I don't agree that oil as a category is unhealthy and I cook with it, often liberally. But it is always fun for me to use different techniques and this dry-skillet charring is one of my faves.

This salad is great for a summer get-together, but it can be halved easily if, like me, you typically cook for a micro family.

For the dressing:

¼ cup olive oil
5 tablespoons lime juice
2 tablespoons agave
¾ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon black pepper

For the salad:

1 cup quinoa
4 ears of corn, kernels removed (about 3 cups or 425g kernels)
1 bell pepper, chopped (about 1¼ cups or 160g)
¾ cup chopped onion (85g)
1½ cups quartered cherry tomatoes (260g)
1 cup roughly chopped cilantro (12g)
⅓ cup toasted sunflower seeds

Make the dressing by combining all ingredients in a small bowl and whisking thoroughly to combine.

For the salad, cook the quinoa just like pasta by bringing a pot of salted water to a boil and boiling the quinoa for 9 minutes. Drain well. Return to the empty pot to dry (off heat).

Heat a large, well-seasoned cast iron skillet over high heat. Working in batches, cook the corn in a single layer, stirring occasionally, until charred in spots, about 3 minutes, deglazing with a little

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water if needed. Repeat this process with the bell pepper and onion. Set the charred vegetables aside to cool.

When everything is cooled, in a large mixing bowl, combine the quinoa, charred vegetables, cherry tomatoes, cilantro, and sunflower seeds and toss well. Serve immediately or store in air-tight containers for up to 3 days.