quinoa pizza bites on-a-stick +
italian grape ice

Do I even need to ask? Who likes pizza? What about pizza on a stick? Each of these awesome little bites are packed with pizza flavor and all of us at Sticky Fingers Cooking can’t get enough of them! I Made some for my kids this weekend, I made just a few to try, and they polished them off in a matter of seconds, immediately asking for “10 more each, please!”

Want some nutritional stats? Each quinoa pizza bite is just 34 calories, yet boasts 1 gram of fiber, 1½ grams of protein, .5 mg of iron, and 7 mg of calcium. Much better than that weekly pizza take out!

More important than the stats, though, is the flavor, and these little bites really pack the flavor. These are kid-friendly, adult-friendly, and THE perfect party food to wow your guests… This is a totally fun recipe for kids to make for dinner, for a party or even pack them in school lunches. Eat a few for a quick, nutritious snack. Put them in hoagie bun, add some marinara sauce, and turn it into a vegetarian “meat”ball sub. Go ahead, get carried away!

You could definitely add pepperoni and other family favorite toppingsto make them even more fantastic for your family! However you eat them, they are sure to be a crowd-pleaser. The Italian Ice is oh-so refreshing and a perfect pairing with the pizza bites…. You might want to make a double batch of each. –Have Fun+Happy Cooking! –Erin

continued
quinoa pizza bites on-a-stick

Pre-Steps

Please pre-cook the quinoa before making the pizza balls. Quinoa can be bitter! The good news is that nearly all of the bitterness is on the outside hull… This can be removed by vigorous rinsing in a fine mesh strainer before cooking. Place the rinsed ½ uncooked quinoa in a pan with 1 C of water… Bring to a boil, then lower to a simmer with a lid on. Cook for 15 min. Let sit for 5 minutes and then fluff with a fork.

chop+squeeze+sauté

Have kids chop ½ of a small white onion (or use 2 green onions for less tears) and 1 small clove of garlic and sauté in your skillet with 1 tsp of olive oil… Now kids get to chop up 3 tomatoes and then, over a big bowl, have kids squeeze out all of the juice… Save the tomatoes and add to the onions and garlic to warm up. Discard the tomato juice…

Let's Count to 10 in Italian:

1: uno — “OO-noh”  6: sei — “SEH-ee”
2: due — “DOO-eh”  7: sette — “SET-teh”
3: tre — “TREH”  8: otto — “OHT-toh”
4: quattro — “KWAHT-troh”  9: nove — “NOH-veh”
5: cinque — “CHEEN-kweh”  10: dieci — “dee-EH-chee”

grate+crack+measure+mush

In a separate big bowl, have kids grate 1 C of smoked mozzarella cheese… Have kids mix and measure ½ cup fresh basil (or ½ tsp dried), ½ tsp salt, 1 tsp paprika and 1 tsp dried crushed oregano into the big bowl with the cheese. Crack open 2 eggs and add to the mixture…Now whip all together…Add the tomatoes, onions and garlic…Add 2 C of the precooked quinoa—and have your kids mush everything together!

chop+squeeze+sauté

Grownups: Pre-heat your oven to 400 degrees…Using a tablespoon measurement, have kids scoop up 2 T of the quinoa mixture and roll into balls onto your cool baking sheet. Place all of the pizza balls about ½ inch apart from each other on the baking sheet.

continued
bake+dip
Bake in your pizza balls in the oven until bubbly on the edges... LET COOL. Have kids gently push a popsicle stick in each pizza bite... Serve with your favorite jarred pizza sauce on the side! Dip and eat! Shout “mangiare la pizza” {man-jar-a la pizza} or “eat your pizza’ in Italian... YUM!

italian grape ice

chop+measure
Have kids pour 1 C of water, ½ - ¾ C sugar (or 4 packs of stevia), 1 C of frozen white grape juice concentrate and 1 T of lemon juice into your blender with the lid on... process until everything is well mixed. Serve in tall glasses with spoons and straws before it melts—ENJOY!

shopping list

Quinoa Pizza Bites On-A-Stick
- 2 cups pre-cooked quinoa (1 C uncooked)
- olive oil
- jarred pizza sauce for dipping
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tsp dried crushed oregano
- 3 tomatoes
- ½ white onion (or sub 2 green onions)
- 1 tsp paprika
- ½ cup fresh basil (or ½ tsp dried)
- ½ tsp sea salt
- ½ onion (or sub 2 green onions)
- 1 small garlic clove
- 1 C mozzarella cheese (smoked mozzarella cheese is the BEST in this recipe!)
- popsicle sticks

Italian Grape Ice
- 1 C of water
- 1 T lemon juice
- 1 C of frozen white grape juice concentrate
- ½ to ¾ C sugar (or 4 packs of stevia)
Quinoa!

Quinoa (pronounced KEEN-wah) has come a long way in the last few years! From health stores to the mainstream, its high protein content and delicate texture have made it a popular substitute for starchier pasta and rice. It’s one of the most delicious, fast-cooking pantry staples we know (not to mention healthy)

★ Cultivated in the Andes for over 5,000 years, quinoa has been called the "mother grain" and "the gold of the Incas." (It’s technically not a grain but a seed, but it is used in virtually the same ways as other whole grains.)

★ Today, the popularity of quinoa is growing steadily as people discover its pleasant nutty taste and superfood qualities.

★ It is a complete protein source that is also high in iron, vitamin B and E, calcium, magnesium, potassium and fiber.

★ Quinoa is great for people with diabetes, because of it’s high fiber content. This means it does an exceptionally good job of slowing the rate at which sugar enters your bloodstream.

★ We’ve read that there are 1,800(!) varieties of quinoa, but just three main types are found in markets here: the most common white variety, as well as a red one and a black one.

★ While no single food can supply all the essential life sustaining nutrients, quinoa comes as close as any other in the plant or animal kingdom."That was the pronouncement of researcher Philip White, in an obscure 1955 article. In the last few years his words have been repeated on countless websites and in articles in newspapers and magazines, as quinoa has been rediscovered.

★ Quinoa (Chenopodium quinoa, or goosefoot) is in fact not technically a cereal grain at all, but is instead what we call a "pseudo-cereal" – our name for foods that are cooked and eaten like grains and have a similar nutrient profile.

★ It has the nickname “goose foot" because the leaves of the plant resemble the webbed foot of a goose.

★ Quinoa is related to beets, chard and spinach, and in fact the leaves can be eaten as well as the grains.

★ Quinoa is gluten free, which makes it extremely useful to the celiac community and to others who may be sensitive to more common grains such as wheat – or even to all grains in the grass family.

★ It contains all eight essential amino acids to make it a complete protein (as much as milk!).

★ Inca warriors ate balls of quinoa to keep them going on long marches and in battle.

★ NASA has proposed quinoa as an ideal food for long-duration spaceflights.

★ It has been grown and consumed for about 8,000 years on the high plains of the Andes Mountains in South America. The Incas were able to run such long distances at such a high altitude because of this powerful food.

★ It grows well in drought and has been designated a “super crop" by the United Nations for its potential to feed the hungry poor.

Fun to relate how health-giving Quinoa is to your kids! If you have children on the sports fields, explain how the protein and carbohydrates in quinoa will give them the energy they need for their games. Tell your kids that the potassium in quinoa helps the heart beat regularly by triggering the heart to squeeze, and that its B vitamins can support their happy moods!

continued
Basic Easy Quinoa Cooking Tips

★ How much cooked quinoa does 1 cup dry quinoa yield?
   1 cup dry quinoa yields about 3 cups cooked quinoa.
★ How long does it take to cook quinoa?
   15 minutes!
★ How do I make quinoa less bitter?
   Nearly, if not all, of the natural bitterness of quinoa’s outer coating can be removed by a vigorous rinsing in a mesh strainer.
★ How do I make better-tasting quinoa?
   Quinoa is really excellent when cooked in vegetable or chicken broth. Also, add about ¼ teaspoon salt to each cup dried quinoa when cooking. Try adding other spices aromatics during cooking as well: A clove of smashed garlic, a sprig of fresh rosemary, a dash of black pepper. Or make it sweet in pancakes, like our Sticky Fingers Cooking recipe this week!
★ Can I use my rice cooker to make quinoa?
   YES! Just use the 2:1 liquid to quinoa ratio and follow the instructions on your rice cooker.
★ Rinse quinoa?
   Rinsing removes quinoa’s natural coating, called saponin, which can make it taste bitter or soapy. Although boxed quinoa is often pre-rinsed, it doesn’t hurt to give the seeds an additional rinse at home. Some cookbooks suggest soaking the quinoa, but, in my experience, this is unnecessary.

Knock-Knock! Who’s There? Quinoa! Quin-WHAT?