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Grilled Corn and Quinoa Summer Salad

Serves 8-10

Two grains, corn and quinoa, share an ancient history as important crops in the developing Americas. We've made them the cornerstone of this salad that's hearty enough, and nutritionally balanced enough to be the main entrée. Quinoa is a protein-packed grain that cooks quickly. (We've made this with farro as well – also very tasty.) The corn for this salad is grilled for a little extra flavor, but may be boiled or microwaved just as easily. Finally, this salad is the perfect do-ahead preparation – the flavors get better as the salad waits for dinnertime.

Ingredients:

1 cup quinoa
1 teaspoon Kosher salt
2 tablespoons olive oil
4 ears of corn, grilled, kernels removed
1 pint cherry (or grape) tomatoes, quartered
8 large basil leaves, chiffonade
1 medium shallot, finely minced
4 oz. Cotija cheese, crumbled (or Feta)

Dressing Ingredients:

1/4 cup white wine vinegar
1/4 olive oil
Zest of one lemon
Juice of one lemon, (about 3-4 tablespoons)
2 tablespoons stone-ground Dijon mustard
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1/2 teaspoon Kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Directions:

1. Prepare the quinoa by cooking in a small saucepan. Combine 1 cup of grain with 2 cups of water salted with Kosher salt. Cover, bring to a boil. Turn off the heat but keep the pan on the burner. Allow the grain to sit and absorb the water, about 15 – 20 minutes, or until all the water has been absorbed.
2. Prepare the corn by husking and removing the corn silk. Brush each ear with olive oil and grill over direct, medium heat turning every 2 minutes until all sides are grilled. (Alternatively, the corn may be steamed, boiled, or microwaved). Remove the kernels from the cob.
3. Combine the quinoa, corn kernels, tomatoes, basil, shallot, crumbled cheese in a large bowl and toss.
4. Whisk the dressing together by combining all dressing ingredients together and whisking vigorously.
5. Pour the dressing over the quinoa and corn, toss well to combine evenly. Refrigerate and allow the salad to rest and the flavors to blend for about an hour.