



Quinoa & Butternut Squash Croquettes

Serves 4 as a side dish

I love the earthy, nutty, buttery combination in this delicate croquette. The cheese adds fullness and complexity to the flavors, but it can be omitted or substitute cottage cheese or tofu to satisfy your nutritional preference. Because the Panko bread crumbs are freeze-dried they do not absorb the cooking oil when frying, which makes for a wonderful crusty breading on the croquette. Serve these as a side dish to roasted meats, or as a snack with a dollop of crème fraîche.



Ingredients:

- 1 medium butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cubed (to yield about 2 cups)
- 1 cup cooked quinoa (recipe follows)
- 4 tablespoons grapeseed oil, divided
- 2 tablespoons finely minced shallot
- 2 cloves garlic finely minced
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon fresh grated nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ginger
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped fresh sage
- 2 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh parsley
- 1 egg (optional use if your butternut squash mash is very dry)
- 1/3 cup freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano
- 3 cups Panko (Japanese) bread crumbs
- 1 tablespoon butter
- Coarse Sea Salt, to season

Preparation:

Steam the butternut squash until tender. Remove to a large mixing bowl and mash it with a potato masher or back of a fork. Add the prepared quinoa and mix to combine. Set aside.

Measure the bread crumbs into a shallow bowl or plate.

Place a large skillet over medium-high heat and add 2 tablespoons of the oil. When hot, add the shallots and the garlic to the skillet. Reduce the heat to medium-low and sauté for 2 minutes to soften. Add the spices, the sage and thyme and cook for 1 minute more or until the shallots and garlic are translucent, but not brown. Remove from the heat and add to the squash-quinoa mixture. Add the parsley, egg (if your squash-quinoa mixture is dry) and cheese to the mixture and combine well. Wipe

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out the skillet with paper towels. *Note: if the mixture is too wet to work with, add up to 1/4 flour or up to 1/2 cup Panko bread crumbs to the mixture.*

Use a 1/4 cup measure to scoop the squash-quinoa mixture into your hands. Carefully roll and shape into a cylinder (classic croquette shape) or oval shape (for easier frying). The mixture will be wet, but workable. Carefully roll the croquette in the breadcrumbs pressing the breadcrumbs into the shape to adhere. Remove to a cookie sheet lined with wax paper. Repeat with the remaining squash-quinoa mixture.

Place the butter and the final 2 tablespoons of grapeseed oil in the skillet. Place over medium heat until the butter is melted and bubbling. Whisk to combine the butter with the oil. Add the croquettes to the skillet and cook until each side is browned about 2 to 3 minutes per side, adjusting the heat to medium or medium low as needed to prevent the croquettes from burning. You may need to add additional grapeseed oil.

When cooked through, remove the croquettes to a paper-towel lined platter. Generously sprinkle with coarse salt. Move to a warmed serving plate. Serve immediately.

Basic Quinoa

Makes about 2 1/2 cups

Ingredients:

1 cup quinoa, rinsed and drained
2 cups water or vegetable stock, or any combination of the two
1 tablespoon butter
Coarse salt and fresh ground pepper, to season

Preparation:

In a medium-sized, heavy bottomed saucepan bring the water or vegetable stock (or combination) to a boil over high heat. Add the quinoa and reduce the heat to medium-low. Cover and allow to simmer until the liquid is absorbed and the corkscrew spirals are visible, about 12 to 15 minutes. Remove from heat and let stand for 5 minutes. Add the butter, and fluff with a fork. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.

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