

Salmon Florentine and Quinoa Pilaf with Pine Nuts

This dish is as impressive looking as it is delicious and nutrient packed. It is a two-tiered wonder with a buttery salmon base and flavorful spinach topping. It is a special preparation that takes no special skill or effort to make.

Serving Size: Makes 4 servings

Ingredients:

- 2 10-ounce packages frozen spinach, thawed
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/4 cup minced shallots
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 5 sun-dried tomatoes, chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 1/2 teaspoon salt, plus more to taste
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, plus more to taste
- 1/2 cup part-skim ricotta cheese
- 4 6-ounce skinless salmon fillets, rinsed and patted dry
- 1 recipe Quinoa Pilaf with Pine Nuts (recipe follows)

Method:

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Using your hands, squeeze the spinach of all excess liquid.

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the shallots and cook, stirring, until they begin to soften, about 3 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute more. Add the spinach, sun-dried tomatoes, red pepper flakes, salt, and pepper and cook, stirring, for an additional 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and let cool for approximately 15 minutes. Add the ricotta and stir to combine. Season with additional salt and pepper to taste.

Using your hands, pack approximately 1/2 cup of the spinach mixture on top of each salmon fillet, forming a mixture to the shape of the fillet. Place the fillets on a rimmed baking sheet or in a glass baking dish and bake for 15 minutes, until the salmon is cooked through. Serve alongside the pilaf.

Notes:

Serving size: 1 piece salmon and 1 cup pilaf. **SEE NOTE**

Per serving: Calories 580 Total Fat 26 g Sat Fat 4.5 g Mono Fat 10 g Poly Fat 8 g Protein 48 g Carb 33 g Fiber 5 g Cholesterol 105 mg Sodium 650 mg

Excellent source of Calcium, Copper, Folate, Iron, Magnesium, Manganese, Niacin, Pantothenic Acid, Phosphorus, Potassium, Protein, Riboflavin, Selenium, Thiamin, Vitamin B6, Vitamin B12, Vitamin D and Vitamin K

Good source of Fiber, Vitamin C, Zinc

Quinoa Pilaf with Pine Nuts

This is a perfect example of how to keep things interesting without going out of your comfort zone or working too hard. A traditional pilaf flavor combo of parsley and pine nuts flavor an exciting, new (but ancient) grain — quinoa — that cooks up tender and mild, just like rice.

Serving Size: Makes 4 servings

Ingredients:

2 cups low-sodium chicken broth

1 cup quinoa
1/4 cup pine nuts
1 tablespoon olive oil
1/2 large onion, chopped
1/3 cup fresh parsley leaves, chopped
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Method:

Reduce the heat to simmer, then cover and cook until the liquid is absorbed and the grain is tender, about 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, toast the pine nuts in a large dry skillet over medium-high heat, stirring frequently, until golden brown and fragrant, about 2 minutes.

Remove the nuts from the pan and set aside. Heat the oil in the same skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until they are softened and beginning to brown, about 6 minutes.

When the quinoa is done, fluff with a fork and transfer to a large serving bowl. Stir in the pine nuts, onions, and parsley. Season with salt and pepper and serve.

Serving size: 1 cup

NOTE: This is the original recipe portion amount. If you cut it down to a standard portion of protein, 3 oz, and $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cup of pilaf you will save yourself 200-250 calories, and almost $\frac{1}{2}$ of every other macronutrient.