

While pronouncing this salad may prove to be a challenge, gobbling it up is far from difficult. This [KEEN-wah] [tuh-BOO-luh] salad is the epitome of summer refreshment. Packed with crunchy cucumbers, juicy tomatoes and fresh-squeezed lemon, your tastebuds will salivate upon a single bite of this cultural treat.

Tabbouleh's highlighted ingredient, parsley, gives this traditional Mediterranean herbal salad a deliciously green and vibrant taste. This dish has gained much popularity in America which is wonderful since the majority of Americans eat predominantly the same rotating foods week to week. We all could stand to welcome a little more culture onto our plate!

Despite being the world's most popular herb, parsley's healing properties are often overlooked due its decorative appeal as a food garnish. Parsley's volatile oil components are shown to inhibit tumor formation and neutralize certain carcinogens such as those from charcoal grill or cigarette smoke. Parsley also contains a rich source of antioxidant flavonoids for repairing damaged cells as well as other precious nutrients such as vitamin A, folate, vitamin C, and potassium. On a scale of 1-1000 points with 1000 being the most nutrient-rich, parsley ranks number two in the top 10 healthiest herbs with a score of 474.

Traditionally this recipe is made with bulgur (cracked wheat) but quinoa, a nutty tasting, gluten-free, high protein alternative pseudo-grain, makes for a fun twist and a filling meal. My favorite way to make tabbouleh is to add only enough grains that they are a light garnish or to skip the grains altogether and keep the recipe very light.

Quinoa Tabbouleh Salad:

- 2 bunches fresh parsley, organic
- 2 lemons, juiced
- 2 c. cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 Asian cucumber, diced
- 1 bunch green onions, sliced
- 2 tbsp. fresh garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp. tamari
- 2 c. cooked quinoa

Wash parsley in water bath to remove any sand. De-stem and chop parsley leaves, rolling tightly into a bunch and slicing thin. Place into large mixing bowl. Prepare all other ingredients and add to parsley bowl: lemon juice, tomatoes, cucumber, green onion, garlic, and tamari. Stir in cooked quinoa. Season with more lemon juice or tamari if desired.

Yield: About 8 cups.

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Shopping List:

- 2 bunches organic parsley (Italian or Curly)
- 2 lemons
- 2 c. tomatoes
- 1 Asian cucumber
- 1 bunch green onions
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 bottle tamari soy sauce
- 1 c. uncooked quinoa (or 2 c. cooked; red quinoa is beautiful)

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Tips:

If using quinoa, be sure to scrub and then soak it before cooking to reduce the phytic acid and saponins within this grain-like seed, as it'll promote greater absorption of nutrients and digestibility.

Try adding other creative ingredients such as ½ c. raw apple cider vinegar, 1 c. chopped radishes, 1 tsp. sea salt instead of tamari, sliced avocado, 3 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil, 1 red onion, sliced almonds, 1 bunch finely chopped fresh mint, 2 grated carrots, sliced beets, or 1 c. black beans. Swap out quinoa with bulgur wheat, millet, buckwheat.