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Spring Vegetable Risotto

Take advantage of abundant spring vegetables with this colorful risotto that cooks in about half the time of the traditional dish. Quinoa adds protein and fiber and complements the texture of the finely chopped cauliflower. Tossed with baby carrots, green peas and sautéed onion, this dish packs a full serving of veggies in each portion.

Quinoa Risotto Primavera

2½ cups cauliflower florets, cut in 1-inch pieces, stems well-trimmed
1½ Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
1/2 cup finely chopped onion
2 Tbsp. finely chopped shallot
2/3 cup quinoa, rinsed and drained
3½ cups fat-free, reduced-sodium chicken broth, divided
1/3 cup thinly sliced baby carrots
1/2 cup frozen baby green peas
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1/3 cup chopped flat leaf parsley

Place cauliflower in food processor. Pulse until cauliflower resembles crumbled feta, about 15-20 pulses; there should be 2 cups chopped cauliflower to set aside. Use leftover to add to soup or salad.

In heavy, wide, large saucepan, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add onion and cook, stirring often, for 3 minutes. Add shallots and cook until golden, about 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add quinoa and cook, stirring constantly, until grain makes constant crackling, popping sound, about 5 minutes. Carefully add 2 cups broth, standing back as it will spatter. Cover, reduce heat and simmer quinoa for 10 minutes.

Add cauliflower, carrots and 1/2 cup hot broth and simmer, uncovered, for 5 minutes, stirring often. Add peas and enough broth to keep risotto soupy, about 1/4 cup. Cook 8-10 minutes, or until quinoa is al dente or to your taste and vegetables are tender-crisp, adding broth 1/4 cup at a time, as needed. Risotto is done when liquid is mostly absorbed and mixture is slightly wet, but not soupy. Off heat, stir in cheese and season to taste with salt and pepper. Garnish with parsley and serve. Leftover risotto keeps for 3 days, covered in refrigerator, and can be served at room temperature as a whole-grain salad.

Makes 8 servings.

Per serving: 120 calories, 4.5 g total fat (1 g saturated fat), 14 g carbohydrate, 5 g protein, 3 g dietary fiber, 280 mg sodium.