

Beet Squash & Quinoa (Baby Food)

Quinoa is a mild-flavored, grain-like seed that hails from South America and supplies a complete protein. It cooks into soft, round pearls with a pleasant chewiness in the center, making it a nice alternative to rice in vegetable dishes like this one. Look for it in the health-food aisle or in the bulk section of most well-stocked supermarkets.

¼ butternut or other winter squash, about 4 oz. seeded

2-3 baby beets, about 4 oz., trimmed and scrubbed

½ cup quinoa

2 teaspoons of olive oil

1 ¼ cups veggie stock, low-sodium vegetable broth or water

Makes about 2 cups.

- Preheat the oven at 375°. Put the squash, cut side down, in a shallow baking dish and add water to come ¼ inch up the sides of the squash. Put the beets in another baking dish and add water to come ½ inch up the sides of the beets. Cover each dish tightly with aluminum foil and roast until the squash and beets are very tender, 45-60 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool. Scoop out the flesh of the squash and transfer to a food processor or blender, discarding the skin. Process to a smooth puree. Add enough water to thin the puree to a consistency your baby can handle. Transfer to a bowl and set aside. Repeat to peel and puree the beets and set aside.
- Rinse the quinoa under cold running water and drain well. In a saucepan over medium-high heat, warm the olive oil. Add the quinoa, stir to coat with oil, then add the stock and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer until the liquid is absorbed and the grains are soft, about 20 minutes. Remove from the heat and let stand, covered, for 5 minutes.
- Fluff the quinoa with a fork and swirl in the vegetable purees.
- Depending on your baby's age and chewing ability, you can return the mixture to the food processor or blender and process to a coarse and smooth puree.

Store it: refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days, or spoon into ice-cube trays or other baby-food freezer containers and freeze, covered, for up to 3 months.

Credit: *The baby & toddler cookbook, Karen Ansel, MS, RD & Charity Ferreira*