

# Green Eggs and Rice

(or quinoa)

This is an easy one-dish whole food meal rich in protein, fiber, good fat, and vegetables. It also allows lots of flexibility – there are all kinds of other options you can use as additions or substitutions. Chopped cooked broccoli or asparagus, for example, or sliced green onions instead of regular onions, and other choices of cheese or milk. You can use any kind of leftover brown rice, cooked quinoa or millet, or whole grain pasta – but white rice does *not* have the nutritional caliber to qualify. Leftovers are delicious heated for lunch the next day. Using this recipe as a basic model, and given that you probably have eggs, milk, and cheese on hand, you may want to put this on the *Ten Most Useful Recipes* list.

*(Serves 4 as a main dish, more as a side dish)*

- 1 bag (16 ounces)
- or- 2 boxes (10 ounce) frozen chopped spinach
- or- 16 ounces fresh spinach, roughly chopped
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium-large onion in ¼-inch dice (3 cups)
- Optional:* ½ pound of fresh sausage (see note)
- 4–6 eggs
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1½ cups whole milk, fresh or evaporated
- 4–6 ounces sharp cheddar cheese, grated (1½–2 cups)
- 2 cups *cooked* brown rice (page 210)
- or- quinoa -or- millet (see next page)

*Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Oil an 8x8-inch (2 quart) Pyrex baking dish or similar.*

1. **To thaw spinach:** Leave overnight in the refrigerator or heat on the stovetop by placing in a pot or skillet with a lid over a low heat, covered, for 20–30 minutes or until completely thawed and warmed. No need to drain the spinach – it’s ready to add to the egg mixture in step 4.

2. Heat oil in a sturdy 10-inch skillet over medium-high heat and sauté onion for about 10 minutes or until very tender. It’s fine if the onions are just beginning to turn brown at the edges. Remove from heat and set aside.
3. (If using fresh spinach, use a 6-quart pot instead of a skillet to sauté the onions. Keep the pot on heat and add the fresh chopped spinach, about 4 cups at a time, tossing with the hot onions. When all the spinach is added and wilted down, remove pot and turn off heat. It only needs wilting, not cooking.)
4. Whisk eggs in a mixing bowl or an 8-cup Pyrex jug. Add seasoning, milk, cheese, and rice, and mix well. Blend spinach and onions with egg mixture. *(You can combine the whole mixture hours or even a day ahead, but bring to room temperature and stir thoroughly again before transferring to the cooking dish.)*
5. Scrape into oiled baking dish and bake uncovered for about 60 minutes or until it is no longer wet in the center. *You can cook it at 325 degrees if you want it to finish cooking a little sooner, but a custard-based dish like this will have a better texture cooked at a lower temperature. If you notice mixture bubbling around the edges, reduce heat by 50 degrees.*

### **Note:**

▶ Adding ½ pound of fresh chicken or pork sausage (see page 49) to the sautéed onions in Step 2 will kick up the flavor, the protein, and the crowd-pleasing qualities. Just push the onions to the side and sauté sausage until browned and well crumbled.

▶ Suggestions for preparing other kinds of greens are on page 166.

▶ This is confident enough to perform solo as a main dish but also pairs nicely with *Marinated Carrot Matchsticks* (page 192) or a substantial salad like *Warm Lentil Salad* (page 206) to make sure people get enough to eat. You’re free to work on a salad or vegetable once you put *Green Eggs and Rice* in the oven.

## Quinoa

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Quinoa (*KEEN-wah*) is a South American grain that looks like ivory-colored millet. (Actually, it is not technically a grain, but is generally used like one.) It is particularly high in protein and is a good alternative to brown rice, especially since it cooks in about half the time. It has a natural coating that supposedly can give the quinoa a bitter taste, so most recipes will tell you to rinse the grain before cooking – even though most quinoa is apparently pre-washed.

### To use quinoa:

In *Quinoa Salad* (page 216); in place of rice in *Green Eggs and Rice* (page 244); in place of barley in *Barley Salad* (page 216); in place of couscous in *Southwest Chicken Salad* (page 223).

### To cook quinoa:

I don't rinse my quinoa. If you do, make sure the sieve is fine enough; quinoa can sneak through some pretty small holes. Also, measure quinoa *before* you rinse it – it swells.

(Makes about 4½ cups)

1½ cup quinoa  
2¼ cups water  
½ teaspoon salt

1. Bring water and salt to a boil in a 2-quart pot (one that has a lid) and add quinoa. Bring back to a boil, then reduce to a simmer, cover, and cook for about 20 minutes. The water should be absorbed and quinoa should be tender.
2. Remove quinoa from the heat. Fluff grains by tossing with a fork, reaching down to the bottom of the pot. Cover and set aside for 5–10 minutes.

If you are concerned about gluten and are choosing quinoa because it is naturally gluten-free, we suggest reading the discussion on the subject of gluten on page 40.

## Millet

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Millet looks much like quinoa at first glance. Millet is a protein-rich grain with a mild but curious flavor, and tiny round yellow grains that swell amazingly when cooked. (Be sure to buy hull-less millet.) Properly cooked millet should be almost fluffy and can expand to almost four times the original quantity. I will admit I have found millet to be a bit tricky to cook, and the texture can be unpredictable. (Lots of the millet grains are still encased in their shiny little hulls so they can be a bit crunchy even after being cooked.) Should you find yourself with a soggy pot of millet, use it in the *Millet Bread* on page 258. No one will know.

### To use millet:

As a hot breakfast cereal with honey and butter or cream; in *Millet Bread* (page 258); in place of rice in *Brown Rice (or Millet) Pudding* (page 215).

### To cook millet:

(Makes about 1½ cups)

½ cup millet  
1¼ cups water  
¼ teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon butter

1. **Toasting millet (optional):** Place millet in a 1½-quart pot or sturdy skillet (one that has a lid) over medium-high heat. In a few minutes, or as soon as the grains begin to pop and smoke, begin to shake the pan every few seconds. In about 2 more minutes the grains begin to look and smell toasty.
2. **Cooking millet:** So, with the skillet still on the heat, add the water, salt, and butter, and bring to a boil. Turn the heat to low, cover, and cook millet for about 20 minutes. Remove from heat and fluff deeply and thoroughly with a fork. Cover again and set aside for 10 more minutes.