Quinoa Salad with Prosciutto, Fennel and Fried Eggs

If something is missing from your salad, it's probably a fried egg. There's something about the oozing, warm, rich yolk enrobing all that lies beneath that makes everything better. Quinoa, packed with protein, is always a smart choice for power lunching. If packing this for the office, swap the fried egg for a soft-boiled one and you're good to go. If the eggs are too much trouble, you can omit them. With the zesty lemon, pimenton and scallions, this salad will still extract you from tedious winter doldrums and have you counting the days to spring.

ingredients

3 cups cooked quinoa, (from 1 cup dry), cooled slightly
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus more to drizzle (see note below)
1/2 teaspoon lemon zest
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice, from about 1½ lemons
Kosher salt, to taste
4 large scallions, whites and light green parts finely chopped and greens thinly sliced on diagonal, kept separate
3 cloves garlic, thinly sliced lengthwise
1/2 teaspoon pimenton, plus more for sprinkling
1 small bulb fennel (1/2 pound), trimmed, halved and thinly sliced crosswise
4 slices prosciutto (2 ounces), torn into bite-sized pieces
4 large eggs

directions

In a large bowl, mix the quinoa with 2 teaspoons olive oil, lemon zest, lemon juice, and about 3/4 teaspoon salt. Set aside.

In a medium nonstick skillet over medium heat, stir 1 tablespoon of oil, the finely chopped scallions (whites and greens), garlic and pimenton until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the fennel and continue to toss or stir until wilted and lightly browned in spots, 6 to 8 minutes.

Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the quinoa. Taste, and adjust seasoning if necessary. Divide among 4 serving bowls. Scatter prosciutto pieces into each bowl.

Wipe out the skillet and put over medium heat. Pour in the remaining 1 teaspoon oil and swirl to coat the pan. Crack the eggs into the oil and sprinkle each with a little pimenton. Cook to set the whites, about 2 minutes. Cover the skillet with a lid or overturned skillet of the same size, then turn off the heat, leaving the pan on the burner. The eggs will continue to cook for about another

minute or two, until yolks are cooked but still runny. (If runny isn't your thing, cook it to your preference — but you'll miss out on the creaminess it brings to the final dish.)

Slip an egg onto the top of each bowl of quinoa. Sprinkle with the scallion greens.

cook's note
Rinsing quinoa removes a little of the bitterness it's known for. To cook, bring a large saucepan of lightly salted water to a boil over high heat. Add 1 cup rinsed quinoa and cook at a rapid simmer until you see the little white tail (this is the germ) appear on each grain and they are tender, about 11 minutes. Drain.

total time: 25 minutes
active prep: 25 minutes
serves: 4
difficulty: medium