

Chenopodium quinoa

[Synonyms : *Chenopodium album* subsp. *quinoa*, *Chenopodium album* forma *subspontaneum*, *Chenopodium canihua*, *Chenopodium ccoyoto*, *Chenopodium ccuchi-huila*, *Chenopodium guinoa*, *Chenopodium hircinum* forma *laciniatum*, *Chenopodium hircinum* subsp. *milleanum*, *Chenopodium hircinum* var. *quinoa*, *Chenopodium hircinum* forma *rubescens*, *Chenopodium hircinum* forma *viridescens*, *Chenopodium nuttalliae*, *Chenopodium purpurascens* var. *punctulatum*, *Chenopodium quinoa* var. *laciniatum*, *Chenopodium quinoa* var. *lutescens*, *Chenopodium quinoa* var. *melanospermum*, *Chenopodium quinoa* subsp. *milleanum*, *Chenopodium quinoa* var. *orbicans*, *Chenopodium quinoa* forma *purpureum*, *Chenopodium quinoa* var. *quinoa*, *Chenopodium quinoa* var. *rubescens*, *Chenopodium quinoa* var. *viridescens*]

QUINOA (English, German) is an annual or perennial. It is native to the South American Andes.

It is also known as Incan rice, *Kenopodio Perua* (Esperanto), *Kinoa* (Japanese), *Kvinoa* (Finnish), *Kvinoo* (Esperanto), *Merlík čilský* (Czech), *Mjölmålla* (Swedish), Petty rice, *Quinoa*, *Reismelde* (German), and *Rismålla* (Swedish).

The Andean Inkas, whose civilization would be destroyed by Europeans, venerated quinoa. In the Autumn a ritual took place in which the first furrow for the new crops of quinoa was opened with a golden tool.

First discovered in the Andes by the 16th Century Spanish explorers, the seeds had by then provided a staple food in the area for centuries, with regular harvests of up to half a ton per acre. Despite the introduction of other grain by subsequent settlers which over a long period of time has significantly reduced the dependence on the native crop, the role of quinoa in the local diet is still important today.

In Peru, Chile and Bolivia the grain was used to make bread and soup, and was fermented with millet (*Panicum miliaceum*) to produce *chicha* beer – which is still made today. The plant has also provided fodder, as well as grain for chicken-feed. The latter has meant that poultry can be reared at higher altitudes than nearly anywhere else in the world.

It was grown quite extensively in France after its introduction to Europe, but the grain's acrid taste did not make it especially popular. However this grain is considered by many to be healthier than some of the common, modern varieties of cereal in the Western World and it is now said to be starting to attract a following in health food shops for instance in the United States. The leaves also provide a spinach-like (*Spinacia oleracea*) vegetable (it has been seen growing in Britain as a commercial crop in 1990, probably for this purpose as well).

Medicinally, the seed was used locally in poultices to heal sores and bruises.