



Alfalfa  
House

# NEWSBULLETIN

## News from the Shop

There are quite a few jobs around the house at the moment and we could really do with your help. So, if you can help out in any way on any of the following jobs, please give Sarah a call on 9519 3374.

► Our Colorbond back gate was recently damaged and the lock we've had in place for a few years is now broken. Several attempts to repair it haven't worked. So, if you have some ideas and handyman skills to help fix the fence, we'd appreciate it.

► We're after a stainless steel bench for the storeroom. The preferred size is around 150cm long, 120cm wide.

► We're also keen to better manage the storeroom. If you're an accomplished or budding designer we'd love you to check out the storeroom and suggest ways to improve our storage.

► There are a few odd jobs going for the handyman around the place: installing a paper towel holder in the shop and one outside the toilet; some work on the fruit+veg spiral in the shop; and a redesign of the cost price section.

► We're planning a blackboard for the wall above the counter area and need a system of pulleys to raise and lower the board.

► We'd like two new lightweight noticeboards for the front window. They would need some padded material or cork attached for messages and a couple of handles for ease of lifting. The dimensions are 800cm high, 1300cm wide.

► We are looking for members who would be happy to be emergency relief volunteers. If you live locally and would be willing to receive the occasional PLEASE HELP call, please send your contact details to [manager@alfalfahouse.org](mailto:manager@alfalfahouse.org). Thanks.

Remember any voluntary work done for the co-op attracts extra discount shops.

## Mural, mural on the wall, when do you get a facelift?

You may have thought someone more artistic or creative than me will come up with a design for the wall along the side of the co-op. Well, we haven't exactly been flooded with ideas so far. The thing is you don't have to be an artist; we're after your ideas. What would you like to see cover that drab grey wall? E-mail your ideas to [mural@alfalfahouse.org](mailto:mural@alfalfahouse.org), call Sarah on 9519 3374 or drop them into the co-op. All ideas are welcome.



Quinoa ready for harvest in the Andes

## PRODUCT OF THE MOMENT

# QUINOA

PRONOUNCED keen.wa SPECIES goosefoot (genus: *Chenopodium*)

► Quinoa is grown primarily for its edible seeds. It is a pseudograin rather than a true grain as it is not a grass.

► Quinoa originated in the Andean region of South America, where it's been an important food for 6000 years. Quinoa is generally undemanding and altitude-hardy, so it's easily cultivated in the Andes up to about 4000 metres.

► Total WORLD PRODUCTION in 2005 was 58,400 tonnes; top producers were Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador.

► The Incas, who held the crop to be sacred, referred to quinoa as the "mother of all grains." During the European conquest of South America, quinoa was scorned by the Spanish colonists as "food for Indians," and even actively suppressed, due to its status within indigenous non-Christian ceremonies.

► NUTRITIONAL VALUE Quinoa is high in protein (12–18%). Unlike wheat or rice, which are low in lysine, quinoa contains a balanced set of essential amino acids, making it an unusually complete food. This means it takes less quinoa protein to meet one's needs than wheat protein. It is a good source of dietary fibre and phosphorus and is high in magnesium and iron. Quinoa is also gluten-free and considered easy to digest.

► PREPARATION. Quinoa is easy to prepare, has a pleasantly light, fluffy texture when cooked, and its mild, slightly nutty flavour makes it an excellent alternative to white rice or couscous. To cook, bring two cups of water to boil with one cup of quinoa, cover on a low simmer for 14–18 minutes. Quinoa goes well with vegetables, complementing bitter greens such as kale and dandelion. Quinoa can also serve as a high-protein breakfast cereal mixed with barley malt or rice syrup, or berries.

► AVAILABLE AT THE CO-OP. Whole quinoa and rolled quinoa.

# RECIPE

## Pumpkin-coconut-tofu pie

■ For one 27cm pie plate, 6–8 servings

### THE FILLING

- 2 cups pureed cooked pumpkin, butternut is best (alternative: orange kumera)
- 1/2 cup coconut milk
- 1/2 cup soft (silken) tofu
- 2 tbsp soft wholemeal or spelt flour\*
- 2 tbsp cornstarch
- 1 vanilla pod, scrape out seeds and add
- 3/4 tsp cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp nutmeg
- 1/8 tsp ground cloves
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 3/4 tsp crushed ginger
- 2 tbsp maple syrup or agave
- 1 pie crust: See recipe below
- Preheat oven to 220°C
- Steam or bake pumpkin in lightly-salted water
- Blend tofu + coconut milk
- Blend pumpkin, maple syrup/agave, spices and salt with the blended tofu + coconut milk
- Lightly coat the bottom of pie crust with flour
- Pour filling in crust, bake for 10 min at 220°C, reduce to 175°C, bake another 30 minutes
- Allow to cool *completely* before serving, or chill to bring out the full flavour and texture

### THE PIE CRUST

- 1 1/4 cup soft wholemeal or spelt flour\*
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 cup oil (sesame or coconut)
- 2–3 tbsp ice cold water
- Blend flours + salt
- Rub oil through flour until mixture is crumbly
- Add just enough water so the mixture begins to clump together (mix with fingers or fork, or in food processor)
- Roll out crust, or press into pie plate with fingers, trim and crimp edges
- Cool in fridge while preparing the filling

\* for a gluten-free pastry, try 50/50 buckwheat/rice flour

Alternative: for a savoury version, replace the maple syrup/agave with tamari and serve with salad.

# TOP 5 COOLING FOODS *for summer*

- 1. CUCUMBERS.** In the days before thermos flasks, travellers would carry cucumbers to quench their thirst. Great in salads or with yoghurt or sour cream as in tsatziki. As they say, "cool as a cucumber."
- 2. MELONS.** A close relative of the cucumber and member of the cucurbit family, melons of all varieties refresh, cool and soothe. They can help reduce fevers and ease water retention. Rockmelons and the Minilee watermelons are current favourites.
- 3. MUNG BEANS AND CHICK PEAS.** Some of the easiest seeds to sprout, mung and chick pea sprouts go well in salads, clear soups and stir-frys. Sprouted mung has been used historically with the equally cooling silken tofu. Both mung and chick pea work well in dhal.
- 4. BASMATI RICE.** An aromatic long-grain rice, basmati is light and easy to digest, dispersing excess water in the body. Basmati mildly encourages the *agni* or 'digestive fire'. We stock a premium quality white basmati from India.
- 5. SPEARMINT.** Spearmint is excellent as a culinary sweetener. It acts as a digestive and combines well with peas, potatoes, or both and is very refreshing prepared as an iced tea.

**BIG THANK YOU #1** to the Natural Paint Place for its generous donation of varnish for our upcoming office refit. The store has a range of eco-friendly paint and varnishes as well as other environmentally-sound products.

CONTACT Rick 9519 0433 VISIT 583a King Street, South Newtown  
WEBSITE [www.thenaturalpaintplace.com.au](http://www.thenaturalpaintplace.com.au)

**BIG THANK YOU #2** to the Cheeky Transport crew for their kind donation of a new pump for our liquid dispensary.  
VISIT 3a Georgina Street Newtown WEBSITE [www.cheekytransport.com.au](http://www.cheekytransport.com.au)

## Choice leftovers for chooks, rabbits and hamsters

While the co-op composts almost all its food waste onsite in our worm farms, we do have plenty of leafy green offcuts that in the past have found their way onto the dinner plates of members' chooks and rabbits. It's a win-win: the co-op finds a good home for the leftovers and the critters get to nibble away on discarded organics. If you'd like to feed your animals some choice offcuts, just drop by and ask one of the staff. Oh, BYO bucket or bag.

## Feed the newsletter

This newsletter is your voice and a great way to communicate with other members.

Please feel free to send in your hints, tips, ideas, suggestions and recipes to [feedback@alfalfahouse.org](mailto:feedback@alfalfahouse.org)