



Creamy Hawaiian Macaroni Salad Side Dish

A Salad with a Story

I first tried this macaroni salad on a trip to Hawaii. It was at a little roadside plate lunch spot. The sun was warm, and the salad was so cool and creamy.

I knew I had to learn how to make it myself. It reminds me of that happy day every time I take a bite. Food can be a wonderful souvenir, don't you think?

Why We Mix While It's Hot

This recipe has a special step. You mix the vinegar and veggies with the

hot pasta. This might seem strange, but it's the secret.

The hot noodles soak up all that tangy vinegar flavor. It makes every single bite taste amazing. This little trick matters because it builds the flavor from the inside out.

The Creamy Dreamy Dressing

The dressing is just three simple things. Mayonnaise, milk, and a bit of sugar. Whisking the milk in makes it so silky and smooth.

I still laugh at that. The first time I made it, I was worried it was too simple. But it's perfect. Doesn't that smell amazing when you mix it up?

The Magic of Waiting

Now, you must let the salad chill for a few hours. This is the hardest part. You have to be patient.

The flavors get to know each other in the fridge. The pasta softens even more. This waiting matters because it turns separate ingredients into one perfect dish.

What's your favorite make-ahead dish for a busy day? I love hearing new ideas.

A Fun Fact to Share

Fun fact: In Hawaii, this macaroni salad is almost always served with a plate lunch. You get two scoops of rice, some kind of meat, and this salad. It's a classic combo.

It shows how food brings people together in simple, happy ways. Have

you ever had a plate lunch? It's a wonderful experience.

Your Turn in the Kitchen

This salad is so friendly for new cooks. There's no fancy chopping, just some easy grating. It's hard to get wrong.

I hope you give it a try for your next family meal. What's your favorite food to bring to a summer BBQ? This macaroni salad is always my go-to.



Creamy Hawaiian Macaroni Salad Side Dish

Ingredients:

Ingredient	Amount	Notes
Elbow macaroni	16 ounces	Cooked according to box directions, drained
Carrots	½ cup	Finely grated
Sweet yellow onion	¼ cup	Grated
Apple cider vinegar	3 tablespoons	
Kosher salt	1 teaspoon	
Fresh cracked black pepper	1 teaspoon	
Mayonnaise	2½ cups	
Whole milk	½ cup	
Granulated sugar	2 teaspoons	

My Island-Style Macaroni Salad

I first tried this salad at a friend's backyard luau. The creaminess just melted in my mouth. I knew I had to learn how to make it myself. Now, it's my go-to dish for summer gatherings. It always brings a little taste of the islands to our table.

See also [Easy Cheesy Potato Casserole Recipe](#)

This recipe is simpler than it looks. The secret is in the little steps. I will walk you through it. You will feel like a pro in no time. Let's get our hands busy in the kitchen.

Ingredients

- 1 pound elbow macaroni
- 1 large carrot, grated
- 1/4 cup grated onion
- 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 cups mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup milk
- 2 tablespoons sugar

Instructions

Step 1: Cook your macaroni just like the box says. Drain it well. While it is still steaming hot, put it in a big bowl. Add the grated carrot and onion. The vinegar, salt, and pepper go in now, too. This is the most important part. The hot pasta soaks up all that tangy flavor. I still laugh at the time I forgot the vinegar. The salad was just not the same.

Step 2: Let that warm macaroni mixture sit for a bit. This lets the flavors get to know each other. Now, for the dressing. In a smaller bowl, whisk the mayonnaise, milk, and sugar. Keep whisking until it is smooth and creamy. Doesn't that smell amazing? (A hard-learned tip: Make sure your milk isn't sour! It will ruin the whole batch.)

Step 3: Time to bring it all together. Pour your creamy dressing over the macaroni. Gently fold it in. You want every piece to get coated. Now, the hardest part is waiting. Cover the bowl and chill it for at least two hours. This rest in the fridge makes it even better. **What's your favorite dish to bring to a potluck? Share below!**

Cook Time: 20min

Total Time: 2hrs 35mins

Yield: 10 servings

Category: Side Dish

Three Fun Twists to Try

Once you master the basic recipe, you can play with it. I love adding little surprises. It keeps dinner exciting. Here are three of my favorite ways to change it up.

Crunchy Add-In: Toss in a handful of crushed potato chips right before serving. It gives a wonderful salty crunch.

Spicy Kick: Add a tablespoon of sriracha to the dressing. It gives it a nice, gentle heat.

Tropical Twist: Mix in a cup of diced pineapple. It makes the salad even sweeter and brighter.

See also [Creamy Butternut Squash Risotto Recipe](#)

Which one would you try first? Comment below!

Serving It Up Right

This salad is a perfect partner for so many meals. I love it with something grilled. The creamy salad and smoky meat are a dream team. It's a little bit of summer on a plate.

For a real island feast, serve it with grilled chicken or juicy hamburgers. A side of fresh fruit salad is lovely, too. For drinks, a cold iced tea is always refreshing. For the grown-ups, a crisp lager beer pairs beautifully.

Which would you choose tonight?



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Keeping Your Macaroni Salad Happy

This salad loves a cool fridge. It will stay fresh for up to three days. Just keep it in a sealed container. I do not recommend freezing it. The mayonnaise will separate and get watery. It changes the creamy texture.

This dish is perfect for making ahead. In fact, it tastes better the next day. The flavors have more time to mingle. I remember making a big batch for a family reunion. It saved me so much time the day of the party. That is why batch cooking matters. It gives you more time with your guests.

There is no need to reheat this salad. Serve it cold straight from the fridge. A little fun fact: the vinegar helps keep the pasta from drying out. **Have you ever tried storing it this way? Share below!**

Simple Fixes for Common Salad Troubles

Is your salad looking a little dry? The pasta can soak up the dressing. Just add a splash of milk. Stir it in gently. This will make it creamy again. I once forgot the milk entirely. The salad was too thick for my liking.

Do not skip the step with the hot pasta. Adding the vinegar while it is warm is key. This lets the pasta soak up all that tangy flavor. It makes every single bite taste amazing. Getting this right builds your cooking confidence. You learn why small steps matter.

Be sure to let it chill for two hours. This waiting time is not just for cooling. It lets all the flavors become friends. Your salad will taste

united and delicious. **Which of these problems have you run into before?**

See also Simple Creamy Pasta with Cheese

Your Macaroni Salad Questions Answered

Q: Can I make this gluten-free?

A: Yes, just use your favorite gluten-free elbow macaroni.

Q: How far ahead can I make it?

A: You can make it the night before. It is even better that way.

Q: What can I use instead of mayo?

A: Plain Greek yogurt is a good, tangy swap.

Q: Can I make a smaller portion?

A: Of course. Just cut all the ingredients in half.

Q: Any other add-in ideas?

A: A handful of peas adds a nice pop of color and sweetness. **Which tip will you try first?**

Until Next Time, From My Kitchen to Yours

I hope you love this recipe as much as my family does. It is a simple joy to share. Food brings us all together around the table. I would be so happy to see your creation.

Have you tried this recipe? Tag us on Pinterest! I always look for your wonderful photos. Thank you for cooking with me today.

Happy cooking! —Elowen Thorn.

You need to try !

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Cooking Method: [No-Cook](#)



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Cuisine: [Hawaiian](#)



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Difficulty: **Beginner**



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Prep time: **20 minutes**



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Cook time: **15 minutes**



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Rest time:**2 hours**



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Total time:**2 hours 35 minutes**



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Servings: **10 servings**



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Calories: **520 kcal**

Best Season: **Summer**

Description

Hawaiian macaroni salad is creamy, sweet, and tangy with soft pasta

and a simple mayo dressing. This easy side dish works great for BBQs, potlucks, and family dinners.

Ingredients

=== Macaroni Salad ===

- 16 ounces elbow macaroni (cooked according to box directions, drained)
- ½ cup carrots (finely grated)
- ¼ cup sweet yellow onion (grated)
- 3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon fresh cracked black pepper

=== Dressing ===

- 2½ cups mayonnaise
- ½ cup whole milk
- 2 teaspoons granulated sugar

Instructions

1. While the cooked, drained macaroni is still hot, add the cooked macaroni, grated carrots, grated onion, apple cider vinegar, kosher salt and pepper to a large mixing bowl. Gently stir to completely incorporate the salad. Cover the mixing bowl and let the mixture sit for 10 to 15 minutes.
2. Using a small mixing bowl, whisk together the mayonnaise, milk and sugar until smooth.

3. Gently fold the dressing into the macaroni salad. Cover and chill in the refrigerator for 2 hours to overnight. Before serving, gently stir the macaroni salad.

Notes

For best results, let the salad chill for at least 2 hours to allow the flavors to meld together.

Keywords: Macaroni Salad, Hawaiian, Side Dish, Potluck, BBQ