



Delicious Pasta Salad Recipes for Every Occasion

Introduction

If you're looking for a refreshing and vibrant dish that's perfect for summer gatherings, picnics, or a light lunch, this Easy Pasta Salad from Love and Lemons is an ideal choice. Bursting with colorful vegetables, creamy feta cheese, and a zesty homemade dressing, this salad is as delicious as it is nutritious. It's simple to prepare and can be made ahead of time, making it a convenient option for any occasion.

Detailed Ingredients with measures

3 cups uncooked fusilli pasta
2 heaping cups halved cherry tomatoes
1½ cups cooked chickpeas, drained and rinsed
2 cups arugula
1 cup Persian cucumbers, sliced into thin half moons
1 cup crumbled feta cheese
1 cup fresh basil leaves, torn
½ cup minced fresh parsley
½ cup chopped fresh mint leaves
¼ cup toasted pine nuts

For the Dressing:

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 teaspoon herbes de Provence or dried Italian seasoning
¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
¾ teaspoon sea salt

Prep Time

20 minutes

Cook Time

10 minutes

Total Time

30 minutes

Yield

Serves 6-8

This Easy Pasta Salad is a versatile and tasty addition to any meal or gathering. The combination of flavors from the fresh vegetables and herbs, alongside the creamy feta and the crunch of pine nuts, creates a delightful dish that everyone will love. Enjoy!

Detailed Directions and Instructions

Cook the Pasta

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the fusilli pasta according to the package directions, or until slightly past al dente.

Prepare the Dressing

While the pasta cooks, in a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, Dijon mustard, minced garlic, herbes de Provence, red pepper flakes, and sea salt. Note that the dressing will have a strong flavor, which will mellow once it coats all the pasta salad ingredients.

See also Chocolate Peanut Butter Pie

Combine Ingredients

Drain the cooked pasta and toss it with a little olive oil to prevent sticking. Let it cool to room temperature. Transfer the cooled pasta to a large bowl and add the halved cherry tomatoes, cooked chickpeas, arugula, sliced cucumbers, crumbled feta cheese, torn basil leaves, minced parsley, chopped mint leaves, and toasted pine nuts.

Dress the Salad

Pour the prepared dressing over the pasta and vegetables. Toss to coat all the ingredients evenly.

Season and Serve

Season the salad to taste with additional lemon juice, sea salt, freshly ground black pepper, and/or a drizzle of olive oil, if desired. Serve immediately, or refrigerate until ready to serve.

Notes

Make Ahead

This pasta salad is a great make-ahead dish for picnics or gatherings. Consider adding the fresh herbs and pine nuts just before serving to maintain their vibrant color and crunch.



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Cook techniques

Cooking Pasta

Bring a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil before adding the fusilli pasta. It is important to cook it slightly past al dente for the best texture in a pasta salad. Drain and toss with olive oil to prevent sticking.

Preparing the Dressing

In a small bowl, whisk together all dressing ingredients until well combined. The dressing should be flavorful as it will mellow when mixed with the pasta and salad ingredients.

Combining Ingredients

After the pasta has cooled to room temperature, combine it with the vegetables, chickpeas, herbs, and cheese in a large bowl. This allows for even distribution of flavors.

Seasoning the Salad

After dressing the salad, taste and adjust seasoning as needed with additional lemon juice, sea salt, or pepper. This step is crucial to enhance the overall flavor.

See also [Chicken Cobbler](#)

Make-Ahead Tips

For best results, prepare the pasta salad in advance but wait to add fresh herbs and toasted pine nuts until just before serving to keep them fresh and crunchy.

FAQ

Can I use different types of pasta?

Yes, you can substitute fusilli with other pasta types such as rotini, penne, or farfalle, depending on your preference.

How can I make this pasta salad vegan?

You can omit the feta cheese or replace it with a vegan cheese alternative and ensure the dressing does not contain any non-vegan ingredients.

Can I add other vegetables to the salad?

Absolutely! Feel free to include other vegetables like bell peppers, spinach, or zucchini based on your taste and preference.

How long will the pasta salad last in the refrigerator?

When stored in an airtight container, the pasta salad can last for up to 3 days in the refrigerator.

Is it necessary to let the pasta cool before mixing with other ingredients?

Yes, letting the pasta cool prevents wilting of fresh vegetables and herbs, helping maintain their texture and flavor.

Conclusion

This Easy Pasta Salad from Love and Lemons is a refreshing and versatile dish that's perfect for any occasion. Packed with a variety of colorful ingredients and a zesty dressing, it not only satisfies the palate but also provides a healthy option for gatherings or meal prep. Enjoy it fresh or refrigerated, and customize it to suit your taste!

Mediterranean Quinoa Salad

Try a Mediterranean quinoa salad with roasted red peppers, olives, and a lemon-tahini dressing for a gluten-free alternative that's equally delicious.

Caprese Pasta Salad

Combine pasta with fresh mozzarella, ripe tomatoes, basil, and a balsamic vinaigrette for a classic Caprese twist.

See also [Mango Sago Pudding](#)

Asian Noodle Salad

Substitute fusilli with soba noodles or rice noodles, adding shredded cabbage, sliced bell peppers, and a sesame-ginger dressing for a delightful Asian-inspired version.

Tuscan Chickpea Salad

Use chickpeas, cherry tomatoes, spinach, and an Italian dressing, topped with grated Parmesan for a heartier option.

Southwestern Black Bean Salad

Mix pasta with black beans, corn, diced avocado, and a lime-cilantro dressing to bring a Southwest flavor to your salad.

Classic Greek Salad

Use similar ingredients but focus on cucumbers, tomatoes, olives, and feta, dressed with a classic olive oil and oregano mix for a traditional Greek experience.



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Delicious Pasta Salad Recipes for Every Occasion | 10

Delicious Pasta Salad Recipes for Every Occasion