

## This Creamy Macaroni Pasta Salad is Perfect for BBQs, Picnics, and Potlucks

cool, creamy, and flavorful pasta salads



**TIME**  
**30 min**

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### INGREDIENTS

For the Salad:

2 cups elbow macaroni, cooked and cooled

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup diced celery

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup diced red bell pepper

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup shredded carrots

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup diced red onion

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup sweet pickles or relish (optional, for extra tang)

For the Creamy Dressing:

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup mayonnaise

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup sour cream (or Greek yogurt for a lighter option)

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar (or lemon juice)

1 teaspoon sugar (optional, for balance)

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon black pepper

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon garlic powder

How to Make Creamy Macaroni Pasta Salad:

1. Cook the Macaroni:

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and cook the macaroni until al dente.

Drain, rinse under cold water, and set aside to cool completely.

2. Prepare the Dressing:

In a large bowl, whisk together the mayonnaise,

sour cream, Dijon mustard, vinegar, sugar, salt, black pepper, and garlic powder until smooth.

### 3. Toss the Salad Together:

Add the cooked macaroni, celery, bell pepper, carrots, red onion, and pickles to the bowl.

Stir until everything is evenly coated in the creamy dressing.

### 4. Chill and Serve:

Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes before serving to let the flavors meld.

Serve chilled, garnished with fresh parsley or paprika if desired.

### My Best Tips for the Perfect Macaroni Pasta Salad:

Use short pasta shapes - Elbow macaroni, rotini, or shells work best for holding the dressing.

Rinse the pasta with cold water - This stops the cooking process and keeps it from getting mushy.

Let it chill - The flavors get even better after at least 30 minutes in the fridge.

Want extra protein? - Add diced ham, shredded chicken, or hard-boiled eggs.

### What to Serve with Creamy Macaroni Pasta Salad:

BBQ chicken or ribs - A classic side for grilled meats.

## DIRECTIONS

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5. Stir until everything is evenly coated in the creamy dressing.
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7. Serve chilled, garnished with fresh parsley or paprika if desired.
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12. What to Serve with Creamy Macaroni Pasta Salad: This salad pairs perfectly with:
13. BBQ chicken or ribs - A classic side for grilled meats.

14. Burgers or sandwiches - A great addition to any summer meal.
15. Grilled vegetables - A fresh, healthy complement.
16. Lemonade or iced tea - The perfect refreshing drink pairing.
17. FAQs: Can I make this pasta salad ahead of time?Yes! Store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 3 days. Stir before serving.
18. Can I make it dairy-free?Absolutely! Use dairy-free mayo and skip the sour cream or use a plant-based alternative.
19. How do I keep my pasta salad from drying out?If the pasta absorbs too much dressing, stir in an extra spoonful of mayo or a splash of milk before serving.
20. This : Creamy Macaroni Pasta Salad is cool, creamy, and bursting with flavor, making it the perfect side dish for BBQs, potlucks, or quick summer meals. Whether you enjoy it fresh or make it ahead, it's guaranteed to be a hit!
21. Give it a try and let me know how it turns out!

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Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/this-creamy-macaroni-pasta-salad-is-perfect-for-bbqs-picnics-and-potlucks/>