

Healthy Mediterranean Orzo Salad: A Fresh and Easy Recipe

Healthy Orzo Salad: A Fresh and Flavorful Meal



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30 min

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INGREDIENTS

For the Salad:

- 1 cup dry orzo pasta
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 cup cucumber, diced
- 1/4 cup red onion, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup Kalamata olives, sliced
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1/4 cup canned chickpeas, drained and rinsed (optional)

For the Dressing:

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- Salt and pepper to taste

Swaps and Notes:

Orzo: Orzo pasta is perfect for this salad because of its small size. You can also use other small pasta shapes like ditalini or even a small shell pasta.

Vegetables: This recipe is a great canvas for whatever vegetables you love. You can add other vegetables like diced bell peppers, some fresh spinach, or even some thinly sliced carrots.

Cheese: Crumbled feta cheese is a classic Mediterranean choice, but you can also use small

mozzarella balls (pearls) or a little bit of crumbled goat cheese.

Add-ins: The canned chickpeas are a great addition for a little extra protein and fiber. You can also add some grilled chicken, shrimp, or chickpeas for a more substantial meal.

Dressing: The lemon juice and olive oil are key for a simple, zesty vinaigrette. The dried oregano adds a classic Mediterranean flavor. You can also use other fresh herbs like mint or basil.

Instructions:

Cook the Orzo: Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the orzo pasta according to the package directions until it's al dente. Drain the orzo and rinse it with cold water to stop the cooking process and prevent it from sticking together.

Prepare the Vegetables: While the orzo is cooking, prepare the vegetables. Halve the cherry tomatoes, dice the cucumber, finely chop the red onion, and slice the Kalamata olives.

Make the Dressing: In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, fresh lemon juice, minced garlic, dried oregano, salt, and pepper.

Combine the Salad: In a large bowl, combine the cooked and cooled orzo pasta, cherry tomatoes, cucumber, red onion, Kalamata olives, crumbled feta cheese, and chopped fresh parsley.

Add the Dressing: Pour the prepared dressing over the salad. Toss everything together until all the ingredients are well coated in the dressing.

Chill and Serve: Let the salad chill in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes to allow all the flavors to meld together. Serve it cold or at room temperature.

Tips for Success:

Rinse the Orzo: Rinsing the orzo with cold water is a crucial step for this recipe. It stops the cooking process and removes the excess starch, which prevents the pasta from becoming a sticky, clumpy mess.

Cut Vegetables Evenly: Make sure you cut your vegetables into similar-sized pieces. This ensures you get a good balance of flavor and texture in every bite.

Chill for Flavor: While this salad is delicious served immediately, the flavors will deepen and meld together if you let it chill in the refrigerator for about an hour before serving.

Taste and Adjust: Don't be afraid to taste the salad as you go. You can add more salt, pepper, or a little more lemon juice to get it just right for your palate.

Serving Suggestions and Pairings:

Nutritional Information:

DIRECTIONS

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10. **Taste and :** Adjust: Don't be afraid to taste the salad as you go. You can add more salt, pepper, or a little more lemon juice to get it just right for your palate.
11. **Serving Suggestions and Pairings:** This healthy orzo salad is perfect as a side dish for grilled chicken, fish, or a simple steak. It would also be a great addition to a potluck or a barbecue. For a light lunch, you can serve it with a side of warm, crusty bread.
12. **For a drink pairing,** a crisp white wine or a simple iced tea would be a great complement to the fresh, zesty flavors.
13. **Nutritional Information:** (Please note that this is an estimate and will vary based on specific brands and portion sizes)
14. **This is a healthy and well-rounded meal.** The orzo provides carbohydrates for energy, the vegetables and olives provide vitamins and fiber, and the feta cheese provides protein. The olive oil adds healthy fats. It's a delicious and satisfying meal that is perfect for a balanced diet.
15. **Storage and Leftover Tips:** This orzo salad stores beautifully. You can store any remaining portions in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. The flavors will continue to develop, making it even more delicious over time.
16. **Final Thoughts:** This Healthy Orzo Salad recipe is a timeless classic for a reason. It's a flavorful, easy, and healthy meal that is perfect for any occasion. The combination of a tender pasta and a vibrant, fresh vegetable mix is simply irresistible. I hope you enjoy this effortless and delicious meal as much as I do!

SWAPS & NOTES

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