

Classic Macaroni Salad: A Creamy, Tangy, and Crowd-Pleasing Side

1/4 cup sour cream or plain Greek yogurt



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INGREDIENTS

1 lb elbow macaroni
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/4 cup sour cream or plain Greek yogurt
2 tbsp apple cider vinegar
1 tbsp sugar
1 tsp Dijon mustard
1/2 red onion, finely chopped
1 celery stalk, finely chopped
1 red bell pepper, finely chopped
1/2 cup shredded carrots
1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped
Salt and black pepper, to taste

Swaps and Notes:

Pasta: Elbow macaroni is the classic choice, but you can use any small pasta shape like ditalini or small shells.

Mayonnaise: Use a good quality mayonnaise for the best flavor. You can also use a light mayonnaise to cut down on calories.

Sour Cream: The sour cream or Greek yogurt adds a nice tang to the dressing. You can use all mayonnaise if you prefer a creamier, less tangy dressing.

Vegetables: Feel free to swap in other vegetables you have on hand, like chopped pickles, olives, or corn.

Sugar: The sugar helps balance the tang of the

vinegar. You can use honey or maple syrup as a substitute if you prefer.

Instructions:

Cook the Pasta: Cook the elbow macaroni according to the package directions until al dente. Drain the pasta and rinse it with cold water until it's completely cooled. This stops the cooking process and prevents the pasta from sticking together.

Make the Dressing: In a large bowl, whisk together the mayonnaise, sour cream, apple cider vinegar, sugar, and Dijon mustard. Season with salt and black pepper to taste.

Combine: Add the cooled pasta, finely chopped red onion, celery, red bell pepper, shredded carrots, and fresh parsley to the bowl with the dressing.

Toss: Toss everything together until all the ingredients are evenly coated in the creamy dressing.

Chill: Cover the bowl and refrigerate the salad for at least 2 hours before serving. This allows the flavors to meld together and the pasta to absorb some of the dressing.

Tips for Success:

Rinse the Pasta: Rinsing the cooked pasta with cold water is a crucial step. It cools the pasta down quickly and removes excess starch, which prevents the salad from becoming gummy.

Don't Overcook the Pasta: Cook the pasta until it's al dente. It will continue to soften as it sits in the dressing, so you don't want to start with mushy pasta.

Make It Ahead: This salad is even better when you make it a day in advance. The flavors will have more time to meld together, resulting in a much better final product.

Adjust the Consistency: If the salad seems a little dry after chilling, you can add a tablespoon or two of milk or a little more mayonnaise to loosen it up.

Serving Suggestions and Pairings:

Nutritional Information (Per Serving):

Calories: Approximately 350

Protein: 10g

Fat: 18g

Carbohydrates: 40g

DIRECTIONS

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10. **Serving Suggestions and Pairings:** This Macaroni Salad is an incredibly versatile side dish. It pairs beautifully with anything off the grill, from burgers to grilled chicken. It's also a perfect side for a fun and easy meal like my These Sheet Pan Quesadillas are My Favorite Way to Feed a Crowd Fast or a classic sandwich. For a refreshing drink, a tall glass of my This Blueberry Lemonade is My Favorite Refreshing Drink for Sunny Days would be a perfect match.
11. **Nutritional Information (Per Serving):** Please note: This is an approximation and can vary based on the specific ingredients used.
12. **Calories:** Approximately 350
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16. This is a hearty and satisfying side dish that's packed with carbs and flavor.
17. **Storage and Leftover Tips:** Leftover macaroni salad can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. The pasta will continue to absorb the dressing, so you may need to add a little more mayonnaise or milk to refresh it before serving.
18. **More Recipes You Will Love:** If you're a fan of easy and delicious meals that are perfect for sharing, you'll love some of my other recipes. For a fun, interactive dinner, my This Walking Taco Bar is My Favorite No-Fuss Way to Feed a Crowd is always a huge hit. For a lighter, fresher take on a classic, you can't go wrong with my recipe for A Light Tangy Chicken Salad I Actually Crave and There's No Mayo in Sight.
19. **Final Thoughts:** This Macaroni Salad is a recipe that is sure to become a new favorite in your home. It's a simple, classic comfort food that's perfect for any occasion. It's a great way to bring a little bit of that summer nostalgia to your next meal.
20. I'd love to know what your favorite summer salad is! Let me know in the comments below. And don't forget to follow me for more delicious recipes. Happy cooking!

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More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

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