

California Spaghetti Salad: A Bright, Colorful, and Delicious Side Dish

California Spaghetti Salad: A Bright, Colorful, and Delicious Classic



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INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb spaghetti
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 1/4 tsp red pepper flakes (optional)
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 cup sliced black olives
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1/2 red onion, thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley
- Salt and black pepper, to taste

Swaps and Notes:

Pasta: Spaghetti is a classic for this recipe, but you can also use a different kind of long pasta like linguine or fettuccine. You can even use a short pasta like rotini or fusilli.

Vegetables: Feel free to swap in other vegetables you have on hand, like chopped cucumbers, shredded carrots, or corn.

Dressing: The dressing is a simple classic, but you can customize it by adding a little Dijon mustard for a bit of a kick or a pinch of dried herbs like basil or thyme.

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 spaghetti 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 small bowl or a jar, whisk together the olive oil, red wine vinegar, sugar, dried oregano, garlic powder, and red pepper flakes (if using). Season with salt and black pepper to taste.

Combine: In a large bowl, combine the cooled spaghetti, halved cherry tomatoes, sliced black olives, diced red bell pepper, thinly sliced red onion, and fresh chopped parsley.

Toss: Pour the dressing over the pasta and vegetable mixture. Toss everything gently until all the ingredients are evenly coated in the dressing.

Chill: Cover the bowl and refrigerate the salad for at least 1 hour before serving. This allows the flavors to marinate and become more pronounced.

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 absorb 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.

Slice the Veggies Thinly: Thinly sliced red onion and diced bell pepper make for a more elegant and enjoyable texture in the salad.

Serving Suggestions and Pairings:

Nutritional Information (Per Serving):

Calories: Approximately 350

Protein: 10g

Fat: 15g

Carbohydrates: 40g

DIRECTIONS

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10. **Serving Suggestions and Pairings:** This California Spaghetti 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 [This Walking Taco Bar is My Favorite No-Fuss Way to Feed a Crowd](#) or a simple 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.
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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 spaghetti 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 olive oil or vinegar 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 classic, comforting pasta dish, you can't go wrong with my [Classic Spaghetti Recipe with Homemade Sauce](#). 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 California Spaghetti 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 sunshine to your next meal.
20. I'd love to know what your favorite pasta salad ingredient 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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