

The Best Pizza Pasta Salad Recipe: Easy Crowd-Pleaser for Potlucks

The Best Pizza Pasta Salad: The Ultimate Flavor Mash-Up That Disappears Fast



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INGREDIENTS

12 oz rotini or penne pasta (I prefer rotini for catching the dressing!)

1 cup mini pepperoni slices

1 cup mozzarella cheese cubes or pearls

1/2 cup black olives, sliced

1/2 cup cherry tomatoes, halved

1/2 cup green bell pepper, chopped

1/4 cup red onion, thinly sliced

1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, grated

3/4 cup Italian dressing (bottled or homemade)

1 teaspoon dried oregano

1/2 teaspoon garlic powder

Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Cook the Pasta:** Cook the rotini or penne pasta according to the package directions, aiming for al dente. Immediately drain the pasta and rinse it thoroughly with cold water. This stops the cooking process and prevents the pasta from sticking together, which is crucial for a great pasta salad.
- 2. Combine the Pizza Toppings:** In your largest mixing bowl, combine the cooled pasta with the mini pepperoni, mozzarella cubes, sliced black olives, halved cherry tomatoes, chopped green bell pepper, and thinly sliced red onion. Stir gently to distribute the ingredients.
- 3. Dress and Season:** Pour the Italian dressing over the pasta mixture. Sprinkle in the grated Parmesan cheese, dried oregano, and garlic powder. Season generously with salt and freshly ground black pepper.
- 4. Toss and Chill:** Toss everything until the pasta and all the toppings are evenly coated in the dressing and spices. Once mixed, cover the bowl tightly and refrigerate for at least 1 hour (but preferably 3-4 hours). The chill time is non-negotiable-it allows the pasta to absorb the dressing and the spices to permeate the entire dish, transforming the flavor profile.
- 5. Serve:** Toss the salad one more time before serving. You may need to add an extra splash of dressing or a pinch of salt if the pasta has absorbed too much liquid. Serve cold!

SWAPS & NOTES

Ingredient Swap or Note Pasta Use any short, sturdy shape like fusilli, farfalle, or even elbow macaroni.

Pepperoni Swap for diced salami, chopped cooked bacon, or even diced hard Italian sausage for different savory notes.

Cheese Provolone or sharp white cheddar cubes are excellent substitutes for mozzarella.

Italian Dressing Use your favorite brand or make a simple vinaigrette with olive oil, red wine vinegar, and plenty of herbs.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Don't Overcook the Pasta: Cook it until it's perfectly al dente .

Overcooked, mushy pasta ruins the texture of any pasta salad.

Rinse Immediately: Rinsing the pasta with cold water removes surface starch (preventing gumminess) and quickly brings down the temperature, which is essential for a cold salad.

Taste and Adjust: After the chilling time, the flavor will be more muted because the pasta has absorbed the dressing.

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

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