

10-Minute Chicken Pasta Salad: The Ultimate Quick & Healthy Lunch

The Most DELICIOUS Lunch in 10 Minutes: Easy Chicken Pasta Salad



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10 min

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INGREDIENTS

2 cups cooked tri-color rotini pasta: The twists hold onto the dressing perfectly, and the colors make the dish pop.

1 cup cooked chicken breast, diced: Use grilled, roasted, or rotisserie chicken for ease.

1 cup chopped romaine lettuce: Provides that essential fresh crunch.

1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved: For a burst of juicy acidity.

Optional: 2-3 tablespoons of your favorite vinaigrette (Italian or Balsamic works best) and a sprinkle of parmesan cheese.

Swaps and Notes:

The Pasta: If you don't have rotini, bow-tie (farfalle) or penne are excellent substitutes. For a gluten-free version, use a high-quality chickpea or brown rice pasta.

The Protein: Not a fan of chicken? You can swap the diced breast for canned chickpeas to make it vegetarian, or even grilled shrimp. If you are looking for a different spin on poultry, check out this light tangy chicken salad which uses no mayo.

The Greens: If you don't have romaine, spinach or arugula add a nice peppery bite, though they will wilt faster if you are making this for meal prep.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

Prep the Base: Take your 2 cups of pre-cooked and cooled tri-color rotini and place them in a large

mixing bowl. If the pasta has stuck together in the fridge, a quick toss with a teaspoon of olive oil will loosen it up.

Add the Protein: Add your 1 cup of diced chicken breast to the bowl. I prefer cold chicken for this recipe as it keeps the lettuce from wilting.

The Veggie Crunch: Fold in the chopped romaine lettuce and the halved cherry tomatoes.

Dress It Up: Drizzle your choice of vinaigrette over the top. Start with a small amount and toss; you can always add more, but you can't take it away!

Final Toss: Gently toss everything together until the pasta and vegetables are evenly coated. Serve immediately or chill for 30 minutes to let the flavors meld.

Tips for Success:

Salt Your Pasta Water: Even though this is a cold salad, the flavor starts with the pasta. Ensure your rotini is cooked in well-salted water so it isn't bland.

Don't Overcook: Aim for al dente. Mushy pasta will break apart when you toss it with the chicken and tomatoes.

Dry the Lettuce: Make sure your romaine is spun dry after washing. Excess water will dilute your dressing and make the bottom of the bowl soggy.

Serving Suggestions and Pairings:

Nutritional Information (Per Serving):

Calories: 385 kcal

Protein: 28g

Carbohydrates: 42g

Fat: 12g (depending on dressing choice)

Fiber: 4g

Storage and Leftover Tips:

More Recipes You Will Love:

Mexican Chicken and Rice Casserole: A great one-pan dinner for busy nights.

Light Tangy Chicken Salad (No Mayo): Perfect for those looking for a lighter protein option.

3-Ingredient Egg Wraps: The ultimate breakfast or lunch hack.

Final Thoughts:

DIRECTIONS

1. **Prep the : Base:** Take your 2 cups of pre-cooked and cooled tri-color rotini and place them in a large mixing bowl. If the pasta has stuck together in the fridge, a quick toss with a teaspoon of olive oil will loosen it up.
2. **Add the : Protein:** Add your 1 cup of diced chicken breast to the bowl. I prefer cold chicken for this recipe as it keeps the lettuce from wilting.
3. **The : Veggie Crunch:** Fold in the chopped romaine lettuce and the halved cherry tomatoes.
4. **Dress : It Up:** Drizzle your choice of vinaigrette over the top. Start with a small amount and toss; you can always add more, but you can't take it away!
5. **Final : Toss:** Gently toss everything together until the pasta and vegetables are evenly coated. Serve immediately or chill for 30 minutes to let the flavors meld.
6. **Tips for Success: Salt Your Pasta Water:** Even though this is a cold salad, the flavor starts with the pasta. Ensure your rotini is cooked in well-salted water so it isn't bland.
7. **Don't : Overcook:** Aim for al dente. Mushy pasta will break apart when you toss it with the chicken and tomatoes.
8. **Dry the : Lettuce:** Make sure your romaine is spun dry after washing. Excess water will dilute your dressing and make the bottom of the bowl soggy.
9. **Serving Suggestions and Pairings:** This pasta salad is quite filling on its own, but it also pairs beautifully with other dishes if you are hosting a luncheon. I love serving this alongside these sheet

pan quesadillas if I have a larger group to feed.

10. For a refreshing beverage to cut through the savory flavors, I highly recommend pairing this meal with a glass of this homemade blueberry lemonade. The sweetness of the berries and the tartness of the lemon complement the vinaigrette in the salad perfectly.
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12. Calories: 385 kcal
13. Protein: 28g
14. Carbohydrates: 42g
15. Fat: 12g (depending on dressing choice)
16. Fiber: 4g
17. Storage and Leftover Tips: This Chicken Pasta Salad stores well in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 days. However, keep in mind that the romaine lettuce will lose its crispness the longer it sits in the dressing.
18. Pro : Tip: If you are meal prepping this for later in the week, store the lettuce and dressing separately and mix them in just before you eat.
19. More Recipes You Will Love: If you enjoyed this quick and easy lunch, you should definitely try these other fan favorites from the blog:
20. Mexican : Chicken and Rice Casserole: A great one-pan dinner for busy nights.
21. Light : Tangy Chicken Salad (No Mayo): Perfect for those looking for a lighter protein option.
22. 3-Ingredient Egg Wraps: The ultimate breakfast or lunch hack.
23. Final Thoughts: Eating well doesn't have to take hours of preparation. This 10-minute Chicken Pasta Salad is a testament to the fact that fresh, whole ingredients can be assembled quickly into a meal that feels special. I make this at least once a week during the summer months, and it never gets old!
24. I'd love to hear from you! Did you try a different dressing? Or maybe you added some feta cheese? Let me know in the comments below, and don't forget to follow Chefmaniac for more easy, delicious recipes from my kitchen to yours.

SWAPS & NOTES

The Pasta: If you don't have rotini, bow-tie (farfalle) or penne are excellent substitutes.

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You can swap the diced breast for canned chickpeas to make it vegetarian, or even grilled shrimp.

If you are looking for a different spin on poultry, check out this light tangy chicken salad which uses no mayo.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

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Mushy pasta will break apart when you toss it with the chicken and tomatoes.

Dry the Lettuce: Make sure your romaine is spun dry after washing.

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

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