

Easy Pasta Salad Recipe with Homemade Dressing and Fresh Veggies

1 pound dried pasta, such as fusilli, penne, rotini, or farfalle



TIME
30 min

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INGREDIENTS

For the pasta salad:

- 1 pound dried pasta, such as fusilli, penne, rotini, or farfalle
 - 1 cup sliced bell pepper
 - 1 cup thinly sliced zucchini
 - 1 cup halved cherry tomatoes
 - 1/3 cup thinly sliced green onions
 - 1/4 cup sliced pepperoncini or banana peppers
 - 1 cup halved mixed olives
 - 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese or other hard cheese
 - 1 cup fresh mozzarella balls, chopped
 - 1/3 cup fresh parsley or basil, optional
- For the homemade dressing:
- 1/3 cup red wine vinegar, white wine vinegar, or champagne vinegar
 - 1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt, plus more to taste
 - 1/2 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper
 - 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
 - 2 to 3 tablespoons juice from the pepperoncini jar or relish juice, optional
 - 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil

DIRECTIONS

1. Cook the pasta: Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the pasta and cook until tender, according to the package directions.
2. Drain and rinse well under cold water.
3. Make the dressing: While the pasta cooks, whisk together the red wine vinegar, salt, black pepper, dried oregano, optional pepperoncini juice, and olive oil in the bottom of a large bowl.
4. Dress the pasta: Add the drained and rinsed pasta to the bowl with the dressing and toss well so the pasta is evenly coated.
5. Add the mix-ins: Stir in the bell pepper, zucchini, cherry tomatoes, green onions, pepperoncini, olives, Parmesan, mozzarella, and fresh herbs if using.
6. Taste and chill: Taste the pasta salad and adjust the seasoning with more salt and pepper if needed.
7. Serve right away, or for the best flavor, cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.

SWAPS & NOTES

Short pasta shapes work best because they hold the dressing well and are easy to scoop.

Rotini and fusilli are especially good choices because all those twists catch the vinaigrette and little bits of cheese.

The dressing is simple, but it does a lot.

Red wine vinegar gives it a classic pasta salad flavor, while the

optional pepperoncini juice adds extra tang and personality.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Rinsing the pasta under cold water helps stop the cooking and cool it down quickly, which is important for a chilled pasta salad.

Tossing the pasta with the dressing while it is freshly cooked and cooled helps it soak up flavor better than waiting until the end.

Taste before serving, especially after chilling.

Cold dishes often need a little extra salt or pepper to taste their best.

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Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/easy-pasta-salad-recipe-with-homemade-dressing-and-fresh-veggies/>