

# Gluten-Free Orzo Pasta

Easy gluten-free orzo pasta with fresh tomatoes and Parmesan. Ready in 20 minutes with simple ingredients.  
Perfect weeknight dinner recipe.

5 min

PREP

15 min

COOK

20 min

TOTAL

4

SERVINGS

Easy

DIFFICULTY

## Ingredients

- 8 oz orzo
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 3 clove garlic
- 1 tsp crushed red pepper
- 2 tomato
- 1 cup parmesan cheese
- 1 cup basil
- 1 pinch salt
- 1 pinch black pepper

## Instructions

### 1 Cook the Orzo

Fill a large pot with water and bring to a rolling boil over high heat. Add 1 teaspoon salt to the water. Add 8 oz gluten-free orzo and cook for 8-10 minutes or according to package directions, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking.

### 2 Reserve 1/2 cup of the starchy pasta cooking water before draining. Drain the orzo in a colander and set aside.

### 3 Make the Garlic Oil

Heat 3 tablespoons olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add 3 minced garlic cloves and cook until fragrant and lightly golden, about 1-2 minutes, stirring constantly to prevent burning.

### 4 Add 1 pinch red pepper flakes to the garlic oil and cook for 30 seconds until the oil bubbles around the flakes.

## 5 **Combine and Finish**

Add the drained orzo to the skillet and toss to coat with the garlic oil. Add 1 cup diced tomatoes and 1 cup fresh basil, stirring to combine.

6 Add 2-3 tablespoons of the reserved pasta water and toss until the orzo is well coated and slightly creamy, about 1 minute. Add more pasta water if needed to achieve a silky consistency.

7 Season with 1 pinch salt and black pepper to taste. Remove from heat and serve immediately, garnished with additional fresh basil if desired.

## Tips

Always reserve pasta water before draining - the starchy water is essential for creating a silky sauce that properly coats the orzo.

Use plenty of salted water when cooking orzo and stir frequently to prevent the small pasta from sticking together during cooking.

Grate your Parmesan cheese fresh for the best flavor and melting properties. Pre-grated cheese contains anti-caking agents that can affect the sauce texture.

Don't skip the garlic-infused oil step - cooking the garlic gently in olive oil creates a flavorful base that makes all the difference in the final dish.

Fresh tomatoes work best, but if using canned, choose high-quality diced tomatoes and drain excess liquid to prevent the dish from becoming watery.

Taste and adjust seasoning at the end - the Parmesan adds saltiness, so be careful not to over-salt the pasta water or final dish.

Serve immediately for the best texture and flavor. The pasta continues to absorb liquid as it sits, so don't let it wait too long before serving.

For meal prep, slightly undercook the orzo and store components separately, then combine and reheat with a splash of broth when ready to serve.