

Pasta Salad

Classic creamy pasta salad with fresh vegetables and mayonnaise dressing. Perfect for BBQs, potlucks, and summer gatherings. Easy make-ahead recipe.

15 min

PREP

10 min

COOK

25 min

TOTAL

8

SERVINGS

Easy

DIFFICULTY

Ingredients

- 1 lb pasta
- 1 cup red onion
- 2 celery stick
- 1 cup tomato
- 1 cup bell pepper
- 1 cup olive
- 1 cup basil
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 3 cup sour cream
- 1 tsp dijon mustard
- 2 tbsp vinegar
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp oregano

Instructions

1 Cook the Pasta

Bring a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil over high heat. Add 1 pound pasta and cook according to package directions plus 1-2 minutes until just past al dente (pasta should be slightly softer than normal since it will firm up when chilled).

2 Drain pasta in a colander and immediately rinse with cold water until completely cool to the touch, about 2-3 minutes. Shake colander vigorously to remove excess water and let drain thoroughly for 5 minutes.

3 **Prepare the Vegetables**

Dice 1 cup bell peppers, 1 cup celery, and 1 cup red onion into uniform ¼-inch pieces. Halve 2 cups cherry tomatoes. Mince 1 clove garlic until very fine.

4 **Make the Dressing**

In a small bowl, whisk together 1 cup mayonnaise, 1 cup sour cream, 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard, minced garlic, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon dried thyme, and 1 teaspoon black pepper until smooth and well combined.

5 **Combine Ingredients**

In a large serving bowl, combine drained pasta, diced bell peppers, celery, red onion, and halved cherry tomatoes. Add ¾ of the prepared dressing and toss gently with a large spoon until everything is evenly coated.

6 **Chill and Finish**

Cover bowl tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or up to overnight. Just before serving, add remaining dressing and toss gently. Taste and adjust seasoning with additional salt and pepper if needed.

Tips

Cook pasta 1-2 minutes beyond al dente since it will firm up as it cools, ensuring the perfect texture in your finished salad.

Rinse cooked pasta with cold water immediately after draining to stop the cooking process and remove excess starch that could make your salad gummy.

Salt your pasta cooking water generously - this is your only chance to season the pasta itself from the inside out.

Cut vegetables into uniform, bite-sized pieces so every forkful has a good balance of pasta and vegetables.

Reserve about 1/3 of your dressing to add just before serving, which keeps the salad fresh and prevents it from drying out during storage.

Let the salad rest in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours before serving to allow flavors to meld and develop properly.

If your pasta salad seems dry after chilling, stir in a little extra mayonnaise, sour cream, or even a splash of pasta cooking water to restore creaminess.

Add delicate ingredients like fresh herbs, cherry tomatoes, or leafy greens just before serving to maintain their texture and color.