

Suddenly Salad Classic Clone

Ingredients

Rotini	8 oz.	Sugar	½ tsp.
Dried oregano	1 Tbsp.	Salt	¾ tsp.
Dried basil	1 tsp.	Cornstarch	½ tsp.
Dried parsley	1 tsp.	Dried red bell pepper flakes	¼ tsp.
Garlic powder	1 tsp.	Vegetable oil	2 Tbsp.
Onion powder	1 tsp.	Cold water	3 Tbsp.
Parmesan cheese, grated	2 Tbsp.		
Citric acid/TruLemon powder	½ tsp.		

Directions

Combine all seasoning mix ingredients in *Small Bowl #1* — Bring large pot of salted water to boil for **pasta** — Have **oil** and **water** measured and ready

1. In *Small Bowl #1*, whisk together 1 Tbsp. **dried oregano**, 1 tsp. **dried basil**, 1 tsp. **dried parsley**, 1 tsp. **garlic powder**, 1 tsp. **onion powder**, 2 Tbsp. grated **Parmesan cheese**, ½ tsp. **citric acid**, ½ tsp. **sugar**, ¾ tsp. **salt**, ½ tsp. **cornstarch**, and ¼ tsp. **dried red bell pepper flakes** until evenly combined. The mixture should appear uniform with no clumps and have a fragrant herby aroma.
2. Cook 8 oz. **tri-color rotini** in boiling salted water according to package directions until al dente, typically *8–10 minutes*. Pasta is done when tender but still slightly firm to the bite with no raw flour taste in the center. Drain thoroughly in colander and rinse briefly under cold water to stop cooking and cool slightly, about *30 seconds*. Drain well and transfer to *Large Bowl #1*.
3. Add 2 Tbsp. **vegetable oil** and 3 Tbsp. **cold water** to prepared seasoning mix (*Small Bowl #1*). Whisk vigorously for *30 seconds* until well blended and slightly emulsified. The dressing should appear uniform with no separated oil and have a pourable but slightly thickened consistency.
4. Pour dressing (*Small Bowl #1*) over cooked **pasta** in *Large Bowl #1* and toss thoroughly with tongs or a large spoon for *1–2 minutes* until every piece is evenly coated. The pasta should appear glossy and lightly coated with no pools of dressing at the bottom of the bowl.
5. Cover bowl tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least *2 hours* or up to *24 hours* to allow flavors to meld. The salad is ready when chilled throughout, with pasta having absorbed the dressing and flavors well integrated.

Equipment Required

- Large pot (for cooking pasta)
- Colander
- Large bowl (1)
- Small bowl (1)
- Whisk
- Measuring spoons
- Tongs or large spoon
- Plastic wrap

Hints and Notes

Yield

- Serves 4–6 as a side dish
- Equivalent to one standard box mix

Mise en Place

- *Small Bowl #1* — seasoning mix: 1 Tbsp. **oregano**, 1 tsp. **basil**, 1 tsp. **parsley**, 1 tsp. **garlic powder**, 1 tsp. **onion powder**, 2 Tbsp. **Parmesan**, ½ tsp. **citric acid**, ½ tsp. **sugar**, ¾ tsp. **salt**, ½ tsp. **cornstarch**, ¼ tsp. **red bell pepper flakes**; then becomes dressing when 2 Tbsp. **oil** and 3 Tbsp. **water** are added
- *Large Bowl #1* — cooked **pasta** for tossing and chilling (about 4 cups cooked)
- Measure **oil** and **water** before starting; have ready
- No advance prep required beyond measuring ingredients

Ingredient Tips

- **Tri-color rotini**: Use any brand; the spinach and tomato pasta add color but don't significantly affect flavor. Regular rotini works fine if tri-color is unavailable.
- **Citric acid**: Available in the canning or baking section of most grocery stores. Substitute 1 tsp. **TruLemon** powder if citric acid is unavailable—it provides similar tangy flavor.
- **Parmesan**: Use pre-grated or finely grated fresh Parmesan. Avoid coarse-grated cheese which won't incorporate smoothly into the dressing.
- **Dried red bell pepper flakes**: Look for dried red bell pepper in the spice aisle, or substitute a small pinch of paprika (not smoked).
- **Vegetable oil**: Canola, soybean, or sunflower oil work well. Avoid olive oil which has too strong a flavor for this light dressing.
- **Cornstarch**: Helps thicken and bind the dressing; don't omit.

Preparation Tips

- Cook **pasta** al dente—slightly underdone is better than overcooked, as pasta continues to absorb liquid while chilling
- Rinse cooked **pasta** briefly to cool it and wash away excess starch, which helps the dressing coat evenly
- Whisk **dressing** vigorously to create a slight emulsion; this helps the oil and water blend and prevents separation
- Toss **pasta** thoroughly—every piece should be coated. Use tongs or large spoon and toss for at least 1–2 minutes
- The salad tastes best after 2–4 hours of chilling when flavors have had time to develop
- Pasta absorbs dressing as it sits; if the salad seems dry after chilling, add 1–2 Tbsp. **water** and toss before serving
- Taste before serving—you may want to add a small pinch of **salt** or more **citric acid** for extra tang

Make Ahead & Storage

- **Seasoning mix** can be made in advance and stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 3 months
- Prepared **pasta salad** keeps refrigerated for 3–4 days in an airtight container
- Add a splash of **water** (1–2 Tbsp.) and toss before serving leftovers, as pasta absorbs dressing over time
- Not recommended for freezing—pasta texture suffers
- Best served within 24 hours for optimal texture and flavor

Serving Suggestions

- Serve as a simple side dish with grilled meats, burgers, or sandwiches
- This is a base recipe—add-ins are up to you: cherry tomatoes, bell peppers, red onion, black olives, mozzarella cubes, salami, or pepperoni are all traditional additions
- For a more substantial salad, add diced cooked chicken or canned chickpeas
- Garnish with fresh basil or parsley for color and freshness
- Serve chilled or at room temperature; flavor is best when not ice-cold
- Pairs well with barbecue, picnics, potlucks, and casual gatherings