

Garden Pesto Pasta Salad With Rotini

Prep: 20 mins

Cook: 10 mins

Total: 30 mins

Servings: 4 to 6 servings

Pasta salad is a great dish any time of year and the perfect way to use up vegetables from the garden or what you have in the fridge. This tasty garden pasta salad is loaded with chopped fresh vegetables, like cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, and celery, as well as black olives and red onion, if you like. A prepared pesto combined with mayonnaise and lemon juice gives the pasta salad fresh, herby flavor and a creamy consistency. Toss this side dish together and bring it to the next cookout or picnic, serve it for dinner along with grilled chicken, or make it part of a vegetarian meal.

Rotini (corkscrew) pasta is called for in this recipe, but you can use farfalle, fusilli, or another similar short pasta. Also, feel free to adjust or swap out the vegetables depending on your tastes and what you have in the garden or refrigerator. A store-bought pesto means this pasta salad is quick to put together, but go ahead and make it from scratch if you prefer homemade or have a bounty of basil.

Ingredients

- 8 ounces rotini pasta
- 1/2 medium cucumber, peeled and diced
- 1 cup diced and seeded tomato
- 1 (2 1/2-ounce) can sliced olives, drained
- 1/2 red bell pepper, diced
- 1/4 cup chopped celery
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped red onion. optional
- 3/4 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons pesto
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice, freshly squeezed
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley, optional

Steps to Make It

1. Gather the ingredients.
2. Cook the rotini pasta in boiling salted water following the package directions.
3. Drain in a colander and rinse with cool water.
4. Set the pasta aside to cool completely and then transfer it to a large serving bowl.
5. Toss the cooled rotini pasta with the diced cucumber, tomato, sliced ripe olives, bell pepper, celery, and red onion (if using).
6. In a bowl, mix together the mayonnaise, pesto, lemon juice, freshly ground black pepper, salt, and parsley, if using.
7. Combine with the pasta and stir gently until blended. Taste and add more salt as needed.
8. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate until serving time.
9. Serve cold or at room temperature and enjoy.

Recipe Variation

To make the salad hearty enough to be a main dish, add some diced cooked chicken or cubed leftover ham, roast beef, or turkey. To keep it vegetarian, you can toss in a bit of fresh mozzarella or crumbled feta cheese.