

Plate Dream

High-Protein Italian Pasta Salad

20 min Prep time	**15 min** Cook time	**35 min** Total time
4 Servings	**Easy** Difficulty	**Italian** Cuisine

Ingredients

Main Ingredients

- [ ] 12 oz whole-wheat rotini
- [ ] 2 chicken breasts, grilled and sliced
- [ ] 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- [ ] 1 cup cucumber, diced
- [ ] 1/2 cup red bell pepper, diced
- [ ] 1/4 cup red onion, thinly sliced
- [ ] 1/4 cup fresh basil leaves, torn

Dressing

- [ ] 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- [ ] 2 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- [ ] 1 tsp lemon zest
- [ ] 1 garlic clove, minced
- [ ] 1 tsp dried oregano
- [ ] Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Cook the rotini in salted water until al dente, then drain and rinse under cool water.
2. While the pasta cooks, season the chicken breasts with salt and pepper, then grill or pan-sear until cooked through; let rest 5 minutes and slice.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together olive oil, lemon juice, zest, minced garlic, oregano, salt, and pepper to form the vinaigrette.
4. Combine the cooked rotini, sliced chicken, tomatoes, cucumber, bell pepper, onion, and basil in the bowl; toss gently with the dressing until everything is evenly coated.
5. Taste and adjust seasoning if needed, then let the salad rest for ten minutes before serving.

Nutrition per serving

420 kcal	32 g	45 g	14 g
Calories	Protein	Carbs	Fat

Tips & notes

- If you prefer a cooler salad, chill it for 30 minutes before serving.
- For extra flavor, toss the pasta with a splash of pasta water before adding the dressing.
- You can add a handful of toasted pine nuts for crunch.