

Plate Dream

Pesto Pasta Salad

Fresh pesto pasta tossed with crisp vegetables for a light, satisfying dinner.

15 min Prep time	**10 min** Cook time	**25 min** Total time
4 Servings	**Easy** Difficulty	**Italian** Cuisine

Ingredients

Main Ingredients

- [ ] 12 oz short pasta (fusilli or rotini)
- [ ] 2 cups fresh basil leaves, loosely packed
- [ ] 1/3 cup pine nuts, toasted
- [ ] 2 cloves garlic, minced
- [ ] 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- [ ] 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- [ ] 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- [ ] 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- [ ] 1/2 cup sliced black olives
- [ ] Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil, add the pasta, and cook until al dente. Drain, rinse under cool water, and set aside.
2. While the pasta cooks, combine basil, toasted pine nuts, garlic, Parmesan, lemon juice, and a pinch of salt in a food processor; pulse until coarse.
3. With the processor running, slowly drizzle in olive oil until the mixture forms a smooth, glossy pesto. Taste and add pepper if needed.
4. In a large bowl, toss the cooled pasta with the pesto, ensuring every piece is lightly coated.
5. Fold in cherry tomatoes and sliced olives, then let the salad chill for at least 15 minutes.
6. Before serving, give the salad a gentle toss, drizzle a little extra olive oil, and sprinkle with additional Parmesan if you like.

Nutrition per serving

420 kcal	12 g	38 g	22 g
Calories	Protein	Carbs	Fat

Tips & notes

- If the pesto seems thick, add a splash of the reserved pasta water.
- For extra brightness, grate a bit of lemon zest over the finished salad.
- The salad tastes even better the next day as the flavors meld.