

Pasta Salad with Tomatoes, Olives, and Capers *adapted from Cook's Illustrated recipe*

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

When we wanted a full-flavored, refreshing pasta salad recipe with the tomatoes, garlic, basil, and olive oil clinging to the pasta strands, we began by seeding the tomatoes, which eliminated excess juice. Making the sauce for our pasta salad recipe at the last minute allowed the flavors to meld perfectly, without turning dull or losing the sweet, bright flavor of fresh tomatoes, as can happen when they're marinated.

INGREDIENTS

Table salt

- 1 pound pasta (see note)
- 2 pounds ripe tomatoes, cored, seeded, and cut into 1/2-inch dice
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ⅓ cup pitted kalamata olives (sliced), or other brine-cured black olives
- 2 tablespoons capers (drained)
- 1 medium clove garlic, minced
- ¼ cup shredded fresh basil leaves

Ground black pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

SERVES 6 TO 8 AS A SIDE DISH

Headnote

Use only the ripest, most flavorful round tomatoes you can find. Avoid plum tomatoes because they are too firm and tend not to soften, even with the heat of the just-cooked pasta. The tomatoes can be diced a couple hours in advance, but to prevent the garlic from becoming too pungent and the salt from drawing out the tomatoes' juices, wait until the pasta is cooking to add the seasonings to the tomatoes. Short, stubby pasta shapes such as orecchiette, fusilli, and farfalle (bow ties) are the best choice to catch juicy bits of sauce.

Description Text

1. Bring 4 quarts water to boil in large pasta pot. Add 1 tablespoon salt and pasta. Cook until pasta is al dente. Drain well and rinse with cold water.
2. While pasta is cooking, toss together tomatoes, olive oil, olives, capers, garlic, basil, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and pepper to taste in large bowl. Whir tomato seeds, olive oil and some salt to make a dressing. You can add more dressing of whirred tomatoes, olive oil, lemon juice. Add drained pasta to dressing and toss well. Add tomatoes, etc. to dressed pasta and combine. Serve immediately, or, if desired, cool to room temperature before serving, about 30 minutes. (Can be covered with plastic wrap and kept at room temperature for up to 4 hours.)