

Summer Garden Pasta Salad with Olives and Feta

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

To extend the shelf life of our pasta salad recipe, we boiled the pasta in salted water until fully tender, which prevented it from developing a tough, chewy texture when chilled and gave it more flavor. Tossing the hot pasta with a portion of the vinaigrette, rather than letting the pasta cool off first, made the salad more flavorful. To moisten the salad, we landed on the idea of adding pasta cooking water to the dressing, which increased its volume without overpowering the flavors in our pasta salad recipe..

INGREDIENTS

Dressing

- 6** tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 3** tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 3** tablespoons fresh lemon juice from 2 lemons
- 1** medium shallot, minced
- 1** tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1** tablespoon minced fresh oregano leaves, or 1/2 teaspoon dried
- 1** teaspoon salt
- 1/4** teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4** teaspoon ground black pepper

Salad

- Salt
- 1** pound farfalle

INSTRUCTIONS

SERVES 12 TO 14

We like the size of farfalle (bow-tie) pasta here, however, you can substitute any small pasta, such as rotini or penne. If using a different pasta shape, note that the yield may change significantly. Cooking the pasta until it is completely tender is crucial here—pasta becomes tough as it sits in the salad overnight. This recipe was originally published in *The Best Make-Ahead Recipe*.

- 1. For the dressing:** Whisk all of the ingredients together in a medium bowl; set aside.
- 2. For the salad:** Bring 4 quarts of water to boil in a large pot. Stir in 2 tablespoons salt and the pasta and cook until completely tender. Reserve 1 cup of the pasta cooking water, then drain the pasta in a colander. Transfer the hot pasta to a large bowl.
- 3.** Stir the reserved pasta water into the dressing. Pour half of the dressing over the pasta and toss to coat. Stir in the carrots, bell pepper, feta, olives, and parsley. Scatter the tomatoes on top of the pasta (do not mix in).
- 4. To Store:** Cover the pasta salad tightly with plastic wrap and poke several vent holes. Transfer the remaining dressing to an

- 2** medium carrots, peeled and grated over the large holes of a box grater
- 1** large yellow bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and cut into 1/4-inch-thick strips
- 8** ounces crumbled feta cheese (about 2 cups)
- 1** cup pitted kalamata olives (about 6 ounces), chopped coarse
- 1/2** cup minced fresh parsley leaves
- 1** pint cherry tomatoes (about 12 ounces), quartered

airtight container. Refrigerate the pasta salad and reserved dressing separately for up to 2 days.

5. To Serve: Microwave the pasta salad on high power to remove the chill, 1 to 2 minutes. Shake the reserved dressing to recombine, then pour half of the dressing over the salad and toss to combine. Add the remaining dressing as needed to keep the salad moist.