

Treasure Barrel

Pesto Pasta Salad – Fresh Quick Comfort Recipe

15 min Prep time	**12 min** Cook time	**27 min** Total time
4 Servings	**Easy** Difficulty	**Italian** Cuisine

Ingredients

Main Ingredients

- [ ] 12 oz short pasta (fusilli or rotini)
- [ ] 2 cups fresh basil leaves
- [ ] 1/3 cup pine nuts
- [ ] 2 cloves garlic
- [ ] 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- [ ] 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- [ ] 1 lemon, juiced
- [ ] 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- [ ] 1 medium cucumber, diced
- [ ] 1 carrot, grated
- [ ] Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Optional Add-Ins

- [ ] Grilled chicken breast, sliced
- [ ] Crumbled feta cheese
- [ ] Olives, pitted and halved

Instructions

1. Cook the pasta in salted boiling water until al dente, then drain and rinse under cool water to stop cooking.
2. While the pasta cooks, toast the pine nuts in a dry skillet over medium heat until golden, then set aside to cool.
3. In a food processor, combine basil, toasted pine nuts, garlic, Parmesan, lemon juice, and a pinch of salt; pulse while slowly drizzling in olive oil until a smooth, glossy pesto forms.
4. Place the cooled pasta in a large bowl, pour the pesto over, and toss until every noodle is evenly coated.
5. Gently fold in the cherry tomatoes, cucumber, and grated carrot, seasoning with additional salt, pepper, and a squeeze of lemon if desired.
6. Serve immediately or chill for 20 minutes; garnish with extra Parmesan or optional add-ins.

Nutrition per serving

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

Tips & notes

- If the pesto feels thick, thin it with a tablespoon of reserved pasta water.
- Taste and adjust seasoning after mixing with the vegetables.
- For a creamier texture, blend in a drizzle of Greek yogurt (optional).