

Pizza Pasta Salad

From the Kitchen of [Deep South Dish](#)

INGREDIENTS

For the Dressing:

- 1/2 cup V-8 (regular or spicy)
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons vinegar
- 2 teaspoons chili sauce or ketchup
- 1 teaspoon brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon dried Italian seasoning
- 2 tablespoons kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper
- 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon Creole or Cajun seasoning, optional

For the Salad:

- 2 cups dry tri-color rotini pasta
- 3 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled
- 1/2 cup chopped purple onion
- 1 tablespoon chopped garlic
- 1/4 cup each green and red bell peppers, chopped
- 1 cup medium pitted black olives, sliced
- 1- 1/2 cups of mini or quartered pepperoni slices
- 1 (4 ounce) jar or can button mushrooms, drained, optional
- 1 cup grape tomato, sliced lengthwise
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil or parsley
- 8 ounces mozzarella pearls or fresh mozzarella cubed or cubed cheddar
- 2 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese, optional
- Dash dried Italian seasoning

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Whisk dressing ingredients together; set aside.
2. Boil the pasta al dente according to package directions. Drain, rinse well and set aside.
3. Cook bacon to crisp, cool, crumble and set aside.
4. To the drained pasta, add all of the vegetables and fresh herbs.
5. Stir in the dressing, toss and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or preferably overnight.
6. When ready to serve, let rest at room temperature for 20 minutes, then toss.
7. Set aside a tablespoon of bacon for garnish, add remaining bacon and the cheese to pasta salad just before serving.
8. Garnish with a sprinkle of Parmesan cheese, Italian seasoning and the reserved bacon, if desired.
9. Store any leftovers in the fridge.

NOTES

Add or substitute prepared and cooled, refrigerated cheese tortellini. Add a variety of different proteins, such as cooked and crumbled ground beef, sausages, or chopped, grilled chicken, as well as different cheeses and hot peppers. Double for a potluck or party.

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