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Greek-Style Pasta Salad

Makes 8-10 servings

One of our favorite summer dishes, a classic Greek salad, shares all its great flavors with another favorite, pasta, in this garden-meets-grain salad. Choose a pasta that offers plenty of nooks and crannies for holding the finely diced vegetables along with the lemony vinaigrette dressing. It's a favorite at our house and bound to become a favorite at your home, too, all summer long!

Salad Ingredients:

1 lb pasta – (such as rotini)
Salt for boiling water
16 oz grape tomatoes, halved
1 cup pitted Kalamata olives, halved
1 large English cucumber, diced into 1/4-inch cubes
1 green pepper, diced into 1/4-inch pieces
1 small red onion, finely diced
1/4 cup fresh parsley, minced
1/2 cup sun-dried tomatoes, (oil pack), finely chopped
8 oz feta cheese, crumbled
2 cups arugula

Vinaigrette Ingredients:

1 teaspoon dried oregano
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
1/2 teaspoon dried basil
3 cloves garlic, crushed
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1/2 cup olive oil
1/2 cup fresh lemon juice
1/4 cup white wine vinegar
1/2 teaspoon Kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon black pepper

Directions:

(1) Wash the vegetables, pat dry. Cut the tomatoes and olives into halves, and the cucumber, green pepper, onion into a fine dice. Mince the parsley. Place all in a large bowl.

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(2) Drain the oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes well, chop finely, add to the chopped vegetables. Crumble the feta cheese and set aside in a separate bowl. Wash the arugula, remove any large stems, also set aside in a separate bowl.

(3) Mix all of the dressing ingredients together in deep measuring cup or bowl. Whisk vigorously until well-combined.

(4) Bring 4 quarts of water to a boil in a large sauce pot. Add 1-1/2 tablespoons salt to the boiling water, then add the pasta. Boil the pasta until the pasta is al dente – just “tender to the tooth.” Drain the pasta well using a colander; transfer to a large bowl. While still warm, toss the pasta with the dressing. The warm pasta will absorb the wonderful dressing flavors. Allow the dressed pasta to cool – (cooled pasta is important for the next step).

(5) Add the prepared vegetables (tomatoes, olives, cucumber, green pepper, red onion, parsley), the sun-dried tomatoes, feta cheese, and arugula to the cooled pasta. Toss to combine. Store in the refrigerator until ready to serve.