

Pesto Pasta Salad

Pesto:

4 cups washed, cleaned basil leaves, ends trimmed (no tough stalks)
2 teaspoons crushed garlic
1 rounded teaspoon salt
1/2 cup (112 ml) good quality olive oil - you may need a few more tablespoons to thin it
3/4 cup (100 grams) pine nuts

Pasta Salad:

500 grams (approximately a pound) of rotini or fusilli pasta
1 tablespoon salt for pasta water
1/3-1/2 cup black pitted olives
12 large cherry tomatoes
200 grams (7 ounces) feta cheese

Directions:

For the pesto, place basil leaves, crushed garlic (yes, crush it beforehand or it might leave nasty big chunks instead of being smooth), salt, olive oil and pine nuts into a blender or food processor and blend until smooth. If a bit too thick, add a few more tablespoons of olive oil. Set aside. A note, you will have leftover pesto which you can either add in little dollops to your individual plate or save for another salad or myriad other dishes (chicken, potatoes, etc.).

For the pasta salad, bring a large pot of water to the boil and salt it and make sure it's really at a rolling boil. Add the pasta, bring back to the boil and cook according to package directions. Drain pasta in a colander and rinse briefly, draining again. Place warm pasta in large bowl and place at least half a cup of the pesto on top. Toss well till pasta is completely coated and turns green. First option, slice black olives in half, cherry tomatoes in halves or quarters (depending how big they are) and toss well with pasta. Crumble the feta over the top of the salad. Pass the leftover pesto around in a nice bowl.