

MEDITERRANEAN ORZO PASTA SALAD

Feta cheese is staple in many Mediterranean dishes and recipes. It can be bought as either a whole block or as crumbles. You should be able to find a low-cost feta cheese at many grocery stores, including Aldi and Walmart. Additionally, the feta cheese can be replaced with other cheese options such as mozzarella cheese.

Yield: 8 servings

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ cups dried (uncooked) **orzo pasta**
- 2 cups **tomatoes**, diced
- 1 **cucumber**, diced
- ½ **red onion**, thinly sliced
- ½ cup **black or kalamata olives**, sliced
- ¾ cup **feta cheese**, crumbled (can substitute with mozzarella cheese)
- 3 cups **spinach**, roughly chopped

For the dressing:

- ¼ cup **olive oil**
- 2 Tbsp **red wine or white vinegar**
- ½ **lemon**, juiced
- 1 tsp **oregano**
- ½ tsp **salt**
- ¼ tsp **ground black pepper**

Instructions:

1. Start by cooking the orzo pasta according to the instructions on the package, until the pasta is al dente. Al dente means that the noodles are cooked just enough so that they retain a somewhat firm texture, rather than overcooking the noodles which would result in mushy, too-soft noodles.
2. As the pasta is cooking, prepare the tomatoes, cucumber, red onion, olives, and feta cheese. Add the vegetables and cheese to a large bowl.
3. Once the pasta is done cooking, drain the water and add the cooked pasta to the bowl containing the vegetables and cheese. Mix the ingredients together.
4. In a small bowl, combine the olive oil, vinegar, lemon juice, oregano, salt, and pepper to make the dressing. Once all the ingredients are combined, pour the dressing into the bowl with the pasta and mix well.
5. Roughly chop the spinach and add to the past bowl. Mix well and enjoy!

Chef's Note: This pasta salad is best served chilled, so place the finished salad in the fridge to cool before serving. This salad should stay fresh in the fridge to enjoy for 4-5 days.

Per Serving: Calories 193, Protein 5.3 g, Saturated Fat 3.3 g, Sodium 348.9 mg, Fiber 1.9 g, Sugars 3.1 g

This recipe was adapted from www.littlesunnykitchen.com.