

Bite Spoon

Light and Creamy Pesto Caprese Pasta Salad

20 min Prep time	**12 min** Cook time	**32 min** Total time
4 Servings	**Easy** Difficulty	**Italian** Cuisine

Ingredients

Main Ingredients

- [ ] 12 oz short rotini pasta
- [ ] 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
- [ ] 8 oz mozzarella pearls, drained
- [ ] 1 cup fresh basil leaves
- [ ] 1/4 cup pine nuts
- [ ] 2 cloves garlic
- [ ] 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- [ ] 2 tbsp lemon juice
- [ ] Salt and freshly cracked black pepper to taste

Optional Add-ins

- [ ] Grilled chicken strips
- [ ] A pinch of red-pepper flakes
- [ ] Fresh arugula for extra peppery bite

Instructions

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to boil, add the pasta and cook until just al dente, about 8-9 minutes.
2. Drain the pasta, rinse under cold water to stop cooking, and set aside to cool.
3. While the pasta cools, toast pine nuts in a dry skillet over medium heat until golden, then set aside.
4. In a food processor, combine basil, garlic, toasted pine nuts, lemon juice, and olive oil; blend until smooth, adding a pinch of salt.
5. In a large bowl, toss the cooled pasta with the fresh pesto, making sure every piece is lightly coated.
6. Add halved tomatoes and mozzarella pearls, gently folding them into the pasta.
7. Season with salt and pepper, drizzle a little extra-virgin olive oil if needed, and chill for at least 30 minutes.
8. Serve cold, garnished with a few extra pine nuts and a sprig of basil.

Nutrition per serving

380 kcal	12 g	42 g	18 g
Calories	Protein	Carbs	Fat

Tips & notes

- If you prefer a brighter flavor, increase lemon juice by 1 tsp.
- For a vegan version, use plant-based mozzarella alternatives.
- Make ahead: assemble everything except the final drizzle of oil, then add just before serving.