



POOL PARTY

Pesto Pasta Salad

This family-friendly pasta salad comes together in a snap and is great for a summer party, whether poolside or on a picnic blanket under the redwoods or at the beach. Look for the small balls of fresh mozzarella labeled ciliegine—“cherries”—or cut a large ball into small cubes. We love to use pasta from our friends at Bayview Pasta for this delicious dish.

MAKES 4-6 SERVINGS

- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 lb orecchiette or other short pasta
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ preserved Meyer lemon, homemade (page 207) or store-bought (optional)
- 1 lb cherry or grape tomatoes, halved or quartered
- ½ lb fresh mozzarella ciliegine (cherry size), halved
- 1 cup basil pesto, homemade (page 209) or store-bought, plus more as needed
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (optional)
- Pinch of red pepper flakes (optional)

Bring a large pot three-fourths full of water (at least 4 quarts) to a rapid boil over high heat. Add 1 tablespoon salt and the pasta and stir for the first minute of cooking and occasionally thereafter. Cook until al dente, according to the package instructions. Drain into a colander and rinse under cold running water until cooled. Drain again, shaking out the excess moisture. Transfer to a large, wide serving bowl. Drizzle with the oil, toss to coat evenly, and set aside to cool completely.

If using the preserved lemon, remove and discard the pulp, then rinse and mince the peel. Add to the bowl with the pasta.

Add the tomatoes, mozzarella, pesto, Parmesan, lemon juice (if using), and pepper flakes (if using) and toss to coat evenly, adding more pesto if needed to loosen the pasta. Taste and adjust the seasoning with salt, black pepper, and lemon juice if needed, then serve. (The salad can be made up to 2 hours in advance and kept at room temperature; do not refrigerate.)

