

Secret Ingredient Pasta Salad

Serves 6 (or less if you're into leftovers)

This pasta salad is very good, kind of has a “cold amatriciana” feel to it, which, if you've ever eaten cold, leftover amatriciana, you know is a very good thing. (Amatriciana is a classic Roman-as-in-Rome pasta made with cured pork, tomato, sometimes onion and pecorino.)

You can eat it immediately, but it's truly better after a few hours, either cold or at room temp, a textbook example of a great “eat directly out of a container” food.

12 – 16 ounces of pasta, I like a rigatoni for this

Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper

¼ cup olive oil, plus more

4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced

Crushed chili flake, a dab of harissa paste, your favorite hot sauce, anything spicy

1 pound any type of tomatoes (I like the smaller ones on the vine), quartered

½ cup sun-dried tomatoes (!), chopped, sliced, whatever

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

½ red onion, sliced (not too thin)

Coarsely grated pecorino or parmesan cheese

Drink with beer on ice or a very cold, light red wine

1. Cook pasta in a large pot of salted boiling water until just al dente; drain and drizzle with a little olive oil to prevent noodles from sticking.
2. Meanwhile, combine onion and vinegar in a large bowl and season with salt and pepper, let sit while everything else cooks.
3. Heat ¼ cup olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add garlic and season with salt and pepper. Cook, swirling the skillet occasionally until the garlic is tender and just starting to brown, 3 to 4 minutes. Add your spicy something of choice, add the fresh and sun-dried (!) tomatoes and season with salt and pepper.
4. Cook, tossing occasionally until the fresh tomatoes are just burst and juicy (you can use a spatula or wooden spoon to encourage them to break down if they started out especially firm), 5 to 8 minutes.
5. Add pasta and tomato mixture to the bowl with the onions. Drizzle with a bit more olive oil and season again with salt, pepper and your spicy something if you like. Toss, toss, toss until every piece of pasta is evenly coated. Let it sit for 10 minutes or so and toss it again. Think of it as marinated pasta.
6. You can eat it immediately, but it's truly better after a few hours, cold or at room temp. This is perfect “eat out of a container” food at the beach, on the grass, wherever. Top with lots of cheese before eating and drink with something cold and effervescent.

ALISON ROMAN