



Upscale Orzo Salad

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 6 oz orzo pasta
- 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- ½ tsp sea salt
- ½ tsp fresh ground pepper
- 1 cup fresh arugula
- 2 oz crumbled goat cheese
- ¼ cup fresh basil, chiffonade
- ¾ cups dried cherries
- ½ cup toasted pecans, coarsely chopped
- 2 Tbsp fresh squeezed lemon juice
- Zest of ½ lemon
- For garnish: 8 bing cherries, seeded and sliced if you have them + about 2 Tbsp toasted pecans

Instructions

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil, add orzo and cook until not quite done, stirring once or twice, about 6-8 minutes. Drain well and run cold water over the pasta. Shake until no water remains. Spread the orzo on a large rimmed dish and add the oil. Add salt and pepper and toss once more. Refrigerate for around 10 minutes until it has cooled.

Meanwhile, measure and put the rest of the ingredients except the lemon juice and zest into a bowl. When the orzo is cool, add the bowl of chopped ingredients and mix. Add lemon juice and zest, stir and taste to see if you would like more salt.

Before serving, I usually slice a few fresh Rainier or Bing cherries on top just for interest and sprinkle the top with a few chopped nuts.

The salad keeps in the fridge for a few days and is really light and wonderful. This recipe is enough to feed four but can be easily doubled for larger groups. You could make it your own by subbing a different type of toasted nut, spinach instead of arugula, mint in lieu of basil, chopped dried apricots for the cherries. Capiche?