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Whole Grain Pasta Salad: A Fresh, Flavorful Way to Enjoy More Veggies

As winter gradually gives way to spring, our dietary cravings often shift from hearty fare toward lighter, fresher meals. [Healthier 901's](#) Whole Grain Pasta Salad is the perfect transition dish to bridge the seasons—warm, savory and satisfying, while also packed with bright, crisp veggies. We're wild about this delicious, nutrient-rich meal from in-house healthy cooking expert, Chef Phillips, and we're *also* eager to help debunk the nutrition myth that eating pasta is a no-no.

For years, pasta has gotten a bad reputation among the health conscientious, often being labeled unhealthy or “off limits” for those watching their diet. The truth? Not all pastas are created equal. Unlike bleached or multi-grain pasta, whole grain pasta is a nutrient-dense ingredient loaded with vitamins, fiber and minerals not found in refined pastas.

“Whole grain pasta is an excellent source of fiber, which supports digestive health, helps regulate blood sugar and keeps you feeling full longer,” says Leslie Ely, registered dietician, at Methodist Healthcare. “It's also packed with important nutrients like iron, magnesium, zinc and protein, which contribute to heart health, strong bones and overall well-being.”

Incorporating whole grains into your meals is an easy way to take a big step toward better health. As part of our “Every Bite, A Step Forward” initiative, Healthier 901 encourages small, sustainable changes, such as swapping refined pasta for whole grain, to help you look, feel and function like your best self.

Packed with colorful ingredients and tossed in a flavorful dressing, this Whole Grain Pasta Salad is a crowd-pleaser even kids will love—and best of all, it's an effortless (and oh-so-yummy) way to make veggies the star of your plate!

Whole Grain Pasta Salad

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ cups 100% whole grain pasta
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 3 tbsp red wine vinegar
- ¼ cup red onion, finely chopped
- 1 medium garlic clove, minced
- 1 tsp dried oregano

- 1 pint grape tomatoes, halved
- 1 can chickpeas, drained and rinsed (*look for low-sodium, no additives*)
- ½ cup pitted kalamata olives, sliced
- 6 oz crumbled feta cheese
- ½ cucumber, diced
- Fresh parsley, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:

1. Cook whole grain pasta according to package instructions. Drain and let cool completely.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together olive oil, red wine vinegar, garlic, oregano, salt and pepper.
3. Add pasta, red onion, tomatoes, chickpeas, olives, cucumber and feta to the bowl. Toss gently to coat.
4. Garnish pasta salad with fresh parsley and adjust seasoning as needed.
5. Serve immediately, or store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to three days.

Chef Phillips' Pro Tips:

- **Ingredient swaps:** Don't have red wine vinegar? Try lemon juice. Not a feta fan? Use goat cheese or skip cheese altogether. You can also sub in grilled chicken or shrimp for chickpeas if you want to switch up your proteins.
- **Whole grains watchout:** Be sure to use 100% whole grain or whole wheat pasta; avoid labels that say "multi-grain" or "made with whole grains".
- **Know your portions:** A serving size is about ⅓ to ½ cup. If enjoying this pasta salad as a main dish, aim for two servings.
- **Store leftovers securely:** Ensure pasta is fully cooled before storing, and keep storage container tightly sealed to maintain freshness.

Wherever you are on your healthy living journey, this Whole Grain Pasta Salad is proof that eating well doesn't mean giving up your favorite foods. By choosing whole grains and filling your plate with colorful vegetables, you can nourish your body while enjoying a satisfying, flavorful meal.

Visit www.Healthier901.com or download the free Healthier 901 app for more nutritious recipes, tracking tools and expert tips.

Social Media Teaser:

Think pasta is off limits? Think again! We've got a delicious Whole Grain Pasta Salad recipe packed with fiber, protein and fresh veggies—proving that healthy eating can be both delicious *and* satisfying. Find the full recipe and meal prep video at Healthier901.com!