

BLT Pasta Salad

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound rotini or gemelli pasta
- 1 pound thick-cut bacon, cooked crispy and chopped
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1-2 cups chopped romaine lettuce
- 1/3 cup thinly sliced red onion
- 1/2 cup freshly grated or shaved parmesan cheese
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh basil
- Fresh cracked black pepper, to taste

Dressing

- 3/4 cup zesty Italian dressing
- 1/4 cup ranch dressing
- 1 tablespoon mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- Pinch of salt and black pepper

DIRECTIONS

1. Bring a large pot of heavily salted water to a boil. Cook pasta until al dente according to package directions. Drain and rinse lightly with cold water.
2. Transfer the pasta to a large mixing bowl while still slightly warm. Pour about half of the dressing over the pasta and toss well so the pasta absorbs the flavor as it cools.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together the Italian dressing, ranch, mayonnaise, Dijon, lemon juice, garlic powder, salt, and pepper.
4. Add the bacon, tomatoes, red onion, parmesan, and basil to the pasta bowl. Pour over the remaining dressing and toss until evenly coated.
5. Right before serving, gently fold in the chopped romaine lettuce and finish with extra black pepper and additional parmesan if desired.
6. Serve immediately or chill for 30 minutes before serving.