

ITALIAN RICE SALAD *INSALATA DI RISO*

When I was a little boy my mother, Alba, used to make this rice salad for my lunch box. It's a very useful recipe, as you can prepare the salad a day ahead, refrigerate it and take it to work the following day. For maximum flavour, it's best eaten at room temperature, rather than straight from the fridge.

1 Bring 2.5 litres of salted water to the boil in a medium saucepan. Add the rice and cook for about 12 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the peas and beans and boil for 2 minutes.

2 Tip into a sieve placed over the sink. Rinse under cold running water for 1 minute to cool, then leave to drain thoroughly. Tip into a large mixing bowl.

3 Add all the remaining ingredients, except the boiled eggs and Parmesan, and stir gently until everything is well combined. Season with salt and pepper.

4 Transfer the rice salad to a large serving plate. Arrange the boiled eggs around the dish and scatter over the Parmesan.

Serves 6

300g long-grain rice
100g frozen peas, defrosted
100g green beans, cut into 2cm lengths
100g pitted green olives, drained and halved
100g small pickled gherkins, finely chopped
1 red pepper, deseeded and finely chopped
1 yellow pepper, deseeded and finely chopped
10 fresh red cherry tomatoes, quartered
5 tablespoons mayonnaise
5 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
6–8 medium boiled eggs, peeled and quartered
50g Parmesan cheese shavings
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

