



MEDITERRANEAN PASTA SALAD *INSALATA DI PASTA*

If you've never cooked before, this is a great recipe to start with, as very little can go wrong. Just make sure you cook the pasta until al dente – that is, firm with some bite – you don't want soggy pasta. I've suggested a list of ingredients, but you can add pretty much whatever you like – peas, artichokes, cooked ham or tins of sweetcorn and tuna all work well in a pasta salad.

1 Cook the farfalle in a large pan of boiling, salted water until al dente. Drain and rinse under cold running water for 3 minutes, moving the pasta around in the colander so it cools more quickly. Leave to drain thoroughly.

2 Put the farfalle in a large bowl. Add the oil and pesto, season with salt and pepper and stir to combine.

3 Add the mayonnaise, onion, tomatoes, olives, peppers and gherkins. Stir to combine. Add the mozzarella and half the Parmesan shavings. Toss well to mix and taste for seasoning.

4 Transfer the salad to a large serving platter. Scatter over the remaining Parmesan.

Serves 4

400g dried farfalle
6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
3 tablespoons basil pesto
5 tablespoons mayonnaise
1 large red onion, peeled and thinly sliced
15 fresh red cherry tomatoes, quartered
150g pitted black olives (preferably Leccino), drained and halved
1 red pepper, deseeded and finely diced
1 yellow pepper, deseeded and finely diced
100g pickled small gherkins, drained and finely diced
2 x 125g balls of mozzarella cheese, drained and cut into small cubes
80g Parmesan cheese shavings
Salt and freshly ground black pepper