

Pasta Salad

Insalata di Pasta

- 2 tablespoons minced red onion
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Juice of 2 large lemons
- 1 pound bow ties, ziti, or spirals
- 1 large avocado, cut in half, seed removed, flesh scooped out with a large spoon, and thinly sliced
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- 1 cup halved cherry tomatoes
- 6 to 8 basil leaves, torn into bits
- 1 small ball fresh mozzarella cheese, cut into bits
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 small head radicchio, washed, leaves separated

I normally would not include a recipe for a cold pasta salad in a collection of Italian recipes as it is not something Italians traditionally eat, but I do like it as a summer salad on hot days. Serves 6 to 8

In a jar with a lid combine the onion, garlic, olive oil, salt, and 2 tablespoons of the lemon juice. Cap the jar and shake well. Set aside. The dressing can be made a couple of days ahead and refrigerated. Bring to room temperature before using.

Bring 4 quarts of water to a rapid boil and add 1 tablespoon of salt. Add the bow ties and cook until al dente; firm but not mushy. Drain the bow ties and transfer them to a large bowl. Pour the dressing over them and toss well. Season with salt and pepper to taste and set aside.

In a small bowl toss the avocado with the remaining lemon juice and set aside. Add the walnuts and tomatoes to the bow ties and toss. Add the avocado and lemon juice and toss gently. Add the basil, mozzarella, and a grinding of black pepper. Toss everything gently and serve on a bed of radicchio leaves.

NOTE: *On average, Italians consume over sixty pounds of pasta per person per year. Americans consume about twenty pounds per person. In order to fill worldwide demand, pasta is mass-produced around the world but the time-tested artisan production in Italy still adheres to traditional methods, which in turn creates superior pasta.*