**Cold Summer Salad**

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| **Salad Ingredients:**1 small can or jar artichoke hearts (**NOT** marinated!) - reserve liquid for dressing1 can black, pitted olives, drained (sliced or whole)1/2 cup sliced sun dried tomatoes (reserve liquid from jar)1/2 - 1 pint of cherry tomatoes, cut in half (if you can't find cherry tomatoes, just cut regular tomatoes into 1 inch chunks)2 cups broccoli (broken into 1" - 2" pieces) (blanched in boiling water for 1 minute and cooled in an ice bath)1/2 - 1 medium red onion (if you want this salad really oniony, go with a whole onion, otherwise, I caution you, and just go with half!)1 large lemon1 bunch scallions (sliced into 1" pieces)2 large carrots (thinly sliced)1/2 lb. rotini pasta (if you can' find rotini pasta (the curly-q spirals), it's ok to substitute bow ties) | **Dressing Ingredients:** 1 Tbsp. sugar1 tsp. salt1/4 tsp. pepper3 Tbsp. olive oil4 Tbsp. white cider vinegar (or just plain white vinegar is fine!)3 cloves garlic (minced or put through a garlic press)3 Tbsp. fresh oregano (or 1 tsp. dried)3 Tbsp. fresh basil (or 1 tsp. dried)3 Tbsp. fresh parsley (or 1 tsp. dried)2 Tbsp. fresh dill weed (or 1/2 tsp. dried)1 tsp. mustardreserved liquid from artichoke hearts (approximately 1/4 cup)1/2 cup sliced roasted peppersreserved liquid from roasted pepper jar (approximately 1/4 cup)reserved liquid from sun dried tomatoes (approximately 1/4 cup)\*\*\*Reserved liquid measurements are approximate!  You will probably have more from the artichoke hearts and less from the peppers and sun dried tomatoes, that's ok!\*\*\* |

**Instructions:**

1.  Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water to a boil.  Add 1 tsp. salt.

2.  While the water is coming to a boil, cut most of the stalk off of the fresh broccoli, and then snap off the florets with a small part of the stalk intact, using your hands.

3.  Add the broccoli to the boiling water for 60 seconds; then remove it from the water using a slotted spoon, and place it in an ice bath.  (An ice bath is ice water placed in a bowl. This stops anything put in here from cooking and instantly cools it down.)

4.  KEEP THE WATER BOILING ON THE STOVE!

5.  Add 1/2 lb. (usually 1/2 a box) of rotini pasta.  (Rotini is the curly-q pasta; but you can use bow ties, too.)  Boil the noodles for 8 minutes and NO MORE!  You want al dente noodles; not mush!

6.  While the noodles are cooking, cut the carrots as thin as possible or use a mandolin on the thinnest setting.

7.  Get yo'self a BIG ASS bowl.  Start putting your veggies in there as you slice and dice them so you have plenty of room on your cutting board.  This bowl is where the salad will go anyway, so get it out!

8. Cut the ends off of the red onion and cut it in half lengthwise.  Remove the skin.  Slice and then dice as small as possible.  (This is the part where you may only want to use 1/2 the onion, depending on how onion-y you like things.)  Add it to the big ass bowl.

9.  Drain the black olives and slice into rings.  Add it to the bowl.

10.  Cut the artichoke hearts into quarters, and don't forget to reserve the liquid!  Why not pour the liquid directly into the blender (or food processor to save on dirty dishes! :)  Place the artichoke hearts ONLY in the big bowl.

11.  Cut the sun dried tomatoes into thin strips, and don't forget to reserve the liquid!  Add just the liquid to that blender (or food processor) because that's where it will end up anyway! :)  Place the sun dried tomatoes - you got it - in da bowl!

12.  By this time, your noodles are probably done.  8 minutes max!  Drain and rinse the noodles under cold water and set them aside.  (I know you're wanting to place them in the bowl, but not yet!)

13.  Keep on cutting!  Cut the green part of the scallions into 1/2" pieces, then cut the white part into thin rings.  Yes, place them in THE BOWL!

14.  Cut the tomatoes in 1/2 if using cherry tomatoes.  If you have regular size tomatoes, then go for 1" chunks.  Add them to the bowl.

15.  NOW, add your noodles to the bowl and toss everything about a bit.

16.  Prepare the dressing. Ok, ok, I'll break it down into steps for you. If you wanted to conserve on dirty dishes, you already should have your sun dried tomato liquid and your artichoke heart liquid in the blender or food processor.  If it's not there, get it there.

17.  Juice 1 lemon and put the juice without the seeds in the blender.  (I'm not going to type "or food processor" in every step, so just play along if you are using one please!)

18.  Take the garlic, oregano, basil, parsley, dill weed, salt, sugar, pepper, olive oil, vinegar, mustard, roasted red peppers, and the liquid from the red pepper jar in the measurements listed above and put them all in the blender, too.

19.  Blend for 1 minute on high speed.

20.  Pour the dressing over the salad and mix well.  Refrigerate the salad for minimum 2 hours if you possibly can do so.  The flavors will meld even more if you can store the salad overnight.  Just be sure to mix the salad before serving because some of the dressing will settle on the bottom of the bowl.

Yield:  Serves 6 heaping bowl fulls for 6 hungry people.  If you want to use this for a side dish, it serves 8 - or 4, with 4 portions leftover.

**Special Notes:**

Other salad additions could include blanched baby asparagus spears chopped into 1 inch pieces.

This stores 3 - 4 days in the refrigerator.

This is a great "make-ahead" item to bring to a bbq.... and there's NO mayo in it, so you don't have to worry about keeping it at sub-zero temperatures!