



## *Kitchen Cheat Sheet: Classic Macaroni Salad*



### *Tips*

- For an extra layer of flavor, add a splash of pickle juice to the dressing. It adds a delightful tang that will make your salad stand out!
- Don't skip the chilling time; it's crucial for the flavors to develop.
- Use salted water to cook the pasta- about 2 tablespoons salt to 1 gallon of water.
- Be sure to use regular mayo and not low-fat or fat-free.
- Always go by taste with the dressing. I use a lot more sugar than is called for in the recipe - I probably use 1/3 of a cup because we like things on the sweet side. Adjust to your own tastes.
- Full disclosure - Just to be honest - I double the salad olives because I love them.
- Let the flavors blend at least two hours in the refrigerator before serving. It's better the next day.
- You may need to add a little more dressing just before serving if the macaroni soaks up all of the moisture. Just be prepared to make more and stir it in.
- If the dressing seems too thick after it's mellowed in the fridge you can add a little cream or milk to balance it out.

### *Variations*

- Pickle Relish: Add a few tablespoons of sweet pickle relish for extra tang.
- Cheese Lovers: Mix in shredded cheddar or mozzarella cheese for a cheesy twist.
- Spicy Kick: Add a pinch of cayenne pepper or diced jalapeños for a bit of heat.
- Herb Garden: Toss in fresh herbs like parsley, dill, or chives for added freshness.
- Pasta. Elbows, shells, or some other type of macaroni noodles. Ditalini macaroni is fantastic for this recipe and so are shells.
- Some people use Miracle Whip, but I prefer Hellmann's mayo.
- Carrots. Mom always grated the carrots on the small side of a box grater and that's the way I do it, too. I don't like big chunks of crunchy carrots in it but the grated carrots add sweetness.

### *Storage*

It's best when made a day ahead of time.

This doesn't freeze well.

Refrigerate promptly. Since macaroni salad contains mayonnaise throw it away if it's been out for 2 hours or more or if it feels warm to the touch. It's better to "waste" a little food than get sick.

Store any leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 5 days. Stir in a little extra mayonnaise if the salad becomes too dry.

## FAQs

### **How do I keep the macaroni from absorbing all the mayonnaise?**

Be sure to let the macaroni cool completely before making your salad. That way it won't soak up so much dressing. It's also a good idea to keep some extra dressing on hand just in case.

### **Can I use a different type of pasta?**

Yes, shells or other small pasta work best.

### **Can I make this salad ahead of time?**

Yep! It tastes best if it is made the day before anyway. You can make it up to 24 hours ahead of time.

### **Why is my macaroni salad bland?**

Cold foods need more seasoning than warm foods, so always taste the dressing before mixing everything together. A little extra salt, pepper, sugar, vinegar, or mustard can wake the whole bowl up before it spends the night in the fridge.

### **No waste: creative ways to repurpose leftovers**

This may sound a little crazy but I like to make lettuce wraps with the leftovers. Spoon a little macaroni salad in romaine lettuce leaves and wrap. It sounds weird but it's so good.