

Watermelon Cucumber Feta Salad

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Watermelon cucumber Feta Salad with Lemon-Honey Dressing

When the weather warms up and watermelon starts showing up in every market bin, I can't help but crave this bright and refreshing salad. This **Watermelon Cucumber, feta salad with and Lemon-Honey Dressing** is one of my go-to dishes during the warmer months. It's light, vibrant, and incredibly refreshing—with just the right balance of sweet, salty, and tangy.

If you've never paired juicy watermelon with creamy feta before, you're in for a delightful surprise. The sweetness of the melon plays beautifully against the salty bite of the cheese, while crisp cucumber and paper-thin red onions add texture and a little zip. The real magic, though, is in the **simple lemon-honey vinaigrette**, which brings everything together with a bright, citrusy finish.

Whether you're hosting a backyard BBQ, heading to a picnic, or just need a quick and beautiful side dish to serve with grilled chicken or seafood, this salad is always a hit. It comes together in minutes, looks gorgeous on the table, and tastes like summer in a bowl.

Things to know about this

Watermelon Cucumber Feta Salad

The key to making this salad truly shine is starting with a perfectly ripe, sweet watermelon. Look for one that feels heavy for its size, has a creamy yellow spot on one side (that's the field spot—where it rested on the ground and ripened in the sun), and gives a deep, hollow sound when tapped. Avoid melons with shiny skin or white streaks, which can indicate under ripeness. A good watermelon should smell slightly sweet at the stem end and feel firm all over—no soft spots or bruises.

Because the watermelon is the star of this dish, its natural sweetness balances the salty feta and tangy lemon-honey dressing beautifully. Using a bland or underripe melon can really dull the salad, so take a few extra minutes at the market to choose the best one. If you can, cut into it before assembling the salad and taste a piece—juicy and flavorful is the goal! If you love salads as much as I do, try this cucumber tomato avocado salad or my five star Caesar salad

Ingredients

▪ For the Salad:

- 4 cups watermelon, cubed (seedless)
- 1 English cucumber, thinly sliced (or 2 Persian cucumbers)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ small red onion, thinly sliced
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup feta cheese, crumbled or cubed
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh mint leaves, torn
- Salt & freshly cracked black pepper, to taste

For the Dressing:

- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1½ tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon honey
- ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard (optional, helps emulsify)
- Pinch of salt

Instructions

1. **Make the Dressing:**

In a small bowl or jar, whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, honey, Dijon mustard (if using), and a pinch of salt. Set aside.

2. **Prep the Salad:**

In a large bowl, combine the cubed watermelon, cucumber slices, and thinly sliced red onion.

3. **Dress and Toss:**

Drizzle the dressing over the salad and gently toss to combine. Taste and adjust salt if needed.

4. **Add the Feta & Mint:**

Gently fold in the crumbled feta and fresh mint just before serving to keep the texture light and fresh.

5. **Serve Immediately:**

Best served chilled, immediately after mixing. (If making ahead, keep the watermelon mixture and dressing separate until ready to serve.)

Tips:

- Soak the red onion slices in cold water for 10 minutes to mellow their sharpness.
 - Add a handful of arugula or baby spinach for a peppery twist.
 - For extra zing, finish with a sprinkle of chili flakes or a drizzle of balsamic glaze
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Fuyu persimmon walnut salad

Fuyu Persimmon walnut salad

This Fuyu Persimmon salad with toasted walnuts and grilled halloumi cheese is vibrant and a bright winter salad that combines the sweetness of ripe fuyu persimmons, the nuttiness of toasted walnuts, and the salty richness of grilled halloumi cheese. Persimmons are one of winters underrated gems. Their natural sweetness and velvety texture make them a star ingredients in both savory and sweet dishes. For this salad we use Fuyu persimmons, which are crisp and perfect for slicing. Paired with toasted walnuts, they bring a warm nutty crunch that contrasts deliciously with the juicy fruit.

This salad also has peppery mixed greens, salty halloumi and a citrusy vinaigrette that ties everything together.

Why this Fuyu persimmon walnut salad belongs on your table

This fuyu persimmon walnut salad is versatile enough for any occasion. It's light yet satisfying, making it an excellent start to a holiday dinner or a refreshing side dish to roasted meats. The vibrant orange color of the persimmons and the ruby red pomegranate seeds add a festive touch to your winter table.

Growing up, persimmons were a wintertime treat in my household. My family would slice them up and enjoy them as a simple snack, but since then I've discovered how delicious they are paired with savory ingredients.

If your looking to impress family and friends or simple treat yourself to a seasonal delight this Fuyu persimmon walnut salad is the answer. Please don't forget to snap a photo before diving in- the colors alone are worth celebrating.

Ingredients

- 3 thinly sliced Fuyu persimmon
- 4 cups mixed greens
- 1 cup toasted walnuts
- 4 oz. halloumi cheese sliced medium thick
- 1/2 cup pomegranate seeds
- Dressing
- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/3 cup white wine vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. dijon mustard
- 2 Tbsp. honey or maple syrup
- salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

1. In a saute pan over medium high heat in 1 Tbsp. of olive oil cook the cheese until golden on all sides. Remove and in the same pan toast the walnuts until fragrant.
 2. Make the dressing in a bowl or jar whisk together the oil, vinegar, mustard, seasoning, salt and pepper. Adjust your seasonings to taste
 3. Assemble the salad arrange mixed greens on a platter, top with the persimmon slices, toasted walnuts and pomegranate seeds. Place the grilled cheese slices on top. Drizzle with the dressing. ENJOY!!!!
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Italian Potatoes, tomatoes and green beans

Italian Potatoes, tomatoes and green beans

Fresh green beans and potatoes simmered together in a light tomato sauce until deliciously tender. This recipe brings me back to my childhood. My mother would prepare this for dinner when the tomatoes and green beans were in season. She would instill my sisters and I in picking and trimming the green beans, and we would sit under the olive trees in the hills of Tuscany trimming green beans, telling stories and making priceless memories.

Fresh, vibrant and full of delicious flavor this Italian potatoes, tomatoes and green beans is full of good for you ingredients.

Made with a savory combination of onions, garlic, potatoes and green beans all simmered in a delicious Italian flavored tomato sauce makes for a delicious vegetarian dish that's easy to make.

Things to know about this Italian potatoes, tomatoes and green bean recipe

Freshly picked green beans have such a distinct texture and flavor over any frozen or canned product. If you don't have excess to fresh green beans the best alternative would be to use frozen green beans.

When Summer rolls around though , beans are one garden staple I almost always plant. If you don't have a green thumb the use fresh store-bought.

I use cherry tomatoes in this recipe but any tomato works. If you are going to use large tomatoes cut them into dice.

One more thing always use Italian parsley when you make this Italian potato tomato and green bean recipe. The curly parsley is flavorless and should not be used in Italian cooking. I hope you make this. I think you will love it!!!!

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Ingredients

- 1 lb. trimmed green beans
- 3 russet potatoes
- 4 cups cherry tomatoes
- 4 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 Tbsp. minced garlic
- 1 medium chopped onion
- 2 cup marinara sauce
- 1 cup potato water
- 1/2 cup chopped Italian parsley

Instructions

1. Start by peeling the potatoes and cutting into large dice. Clean and trim the green beans
2. In salted boiling water cook the the potatoes until almost cooked about 10 minutes. Add the green beans and cook 10 minutes longer or until the potatoes are fort

tender and the green beans cooked but still crisp.

3. meanwhile in a saute pan over medium high heat in the olive oil saute the garlic and onion until soft and just beginning to brown.
 4. Then add in the tomatoes, marinara and the cooking water from the potatoes. Simmer until sauce thickens. About 10 minutes. Add the drained cooked potatoes and green beans to the tomato sauce. Add in the Italian parsley.
ENJOY!!!
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Easy Mediterranean Puttanesca Pasta Salad

Easy Mediterranean Puttanesca Pasta Salad

Easy Mediterranean Puttanesca pasta salad is a bold and zesty classic, combining the briny, savory flavors of traditional puttanesca sauce with the ease of a chilled pasta salad. Made with al dente pasta, juicy cherry tomatoes, olives, capers, garlic, and a touch of anchovy, it's tossed in a light vinaigrette and finished with fresh herbs. Perfect for summer picnics, potlucks, or a quick Mediterranean-inspired lunch.

This Easy Mediterranean Puttanesca Pasta Salad sauce might have a scandalous past, history has it was made by prostitutes, for it's powerful aroma, used to draw customers.

I don't know how much is fact and how much is fiction, I love the history behind the recipe.

I know growing up we referred to it as the sauce of the prostitutes. The combination of garden fresh tomatoes, anchovies, olives and capers, gives this Puttanesca sauce a robust rich flavor, with aroma that still draws people to a different room,... The kitchen.

I like simple recipes, that come together in less than an hour, but from the looks of the meal we can tell our friends it took hours. Serve it up in pretty white dinner plates add some festive napkins and you have a beautiful table and meal, that comes together in 30 minutes, is quick and easy for family weekday dinners and just fancy enough for Saturday date night.

It's a simple raw sauce with bold flavors, created by strong flavored ingredients.

Things to know about this Easy Mediterranean Puttanesca Pasta Salad

I used large shells, in this puttanesca pasta recipe you can use any shape pasta you like, even gluten free, also I used kalamata olives, I love their pungent taste.

Traditionally the olives used by mother were picked on our family farm in Tuscany, she would cure them in a salt and water solution she changed every few days, for weeks.

until the bitterness was drawn out. They went from a shiny purple to a shriveled up olive, she marinated in olive oil, garlic, orange rind, and red pepper flakes, they were delicious and time consuming.

Although you can customize this recipe to fit your lifestyle and taste, it's important in this recipe to use flavorful olives, and don't omit the anchovies this raw sauce needs the salty goodness they provide. One more thing, you should use albacore tuna.

I hope you try this and the part I like best....Let me know how you liked it!!!!

Ingredients

- 1/2 lbs. large shell pasta cooked according to package directions (al Dente) reserve 2 cups of pasta water before draining
- 1 cup olive oil
- 1/3 cup balsamic vinegar
- 1 small chopped red onion
- 2 Tbs. chopped garlic
- 4 anchovy fillets
- 1/2 cup capers
- 1/2 cup chopped kalamata olives
- 4 cups chopped mixed tomatoes
- 2 cans albacore tuna packed in oil undrained
- 1 Tbs. each chopped Italian parsley, basil, thyme and red pepper flakes
- 1 cup crumbled feta cheese
- Salt and pepper to taste

Instruction

1. Cook pasta according to package directions reserving 1 cup of the water
2. Mean while prepare your dressing
3. Add onion, garlic, herbs, salt and pepper to the olive oil and balsamic vinegar
4. Then Add the Tomatoes let sit for 10 minutes
5. Add the rest of the ingredients except the feta cheese
6. mix in the pasta and reserved pasta water

7. Salt and pepper to taste
 8. Top with the feta cheese and Enjoy!!!!
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Italian Tortellini Antipasti Pasta Salad

Italian Tortellini Antipasti Pasta Salad

The weather in Northern California is heating up, when that happens it gets me thinking about cool pasta dishes for those Summer night meals.

This Italian Tortellini Antipasti pasta Salad recipe is a perfect side dish for hot weather cooking, or if your like me it could be the whole meal.

This pasta dish can be on your table in less then thirty minutes, perfect for last minute dinner, lunch or a quick side for those barbecues.

I make it the day before, it taste better to me after a few hours.

Another thing about this recipe you don't have to stick to the recipe 100%. if you don't have all the ingredients add something else.

Make it your own by blending different ingredients and different pasta, it's easy.

Start with the dressing and build from there, adding or subtracting ingredients to make it yours. If you like salami add more or if you don't add less or if you hate salami leave it out all together. You get the idea.

If your going to use tortellini they cook quickly, 2 to 3 minutes, don't over cook. to stop the cooking process after draining run under cold water.

Add grilled protein to make it a meal.....ENJOY

A few things to know about this Italian Tortellini pasta salad

I make this cold Tortellini pasta salad the day before, it taste better to me after a few hours in the refrigerator for.

Another thing about this Italian cold tortellini recipe is you don't have to stick to the recipe 100%. if you don't have all the ingredients add something else.

Make it your own by blending different ingredients and different pasta, it's easy.

Start with the dressing and build from there, adding or subtracting ingredients to make it yours.

If your going to use tortellini they cook quickly, 2 to 3 minutes, don't over cook. To stop the cooking process after draining run them under cold water.

One more thing you can add grilled protein to make it a meal.....ENJOY

Ingredients

- 1/2 Lb. store bought spinach tortellini
- 1 cup each chopped cherry tomatoes, black and green olives, and spinach
- 1 cup chopped salami and pepperoni
- 1 cup each chopped mozzarella and provolone
- 1 cup chopped pepperoncini
- 1 cup chopped red onion

• Instructions

- Make the dressing By combining 2 Tbs chopped garlic
 - 1 tablespoon each mixed herbs basil Italian parsley and thyme
 - 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
 - 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
 - 1/3 cup red wine vinegar
 - 1/4 cup lemon juice
 - Salt and pepper to taste
 - Whisk all ingredients for the dressing together set aside
 - AssembleCook tortellini according to package directions reserving 1 cup of pasta water before draining
 - Add all ingredients to the vinaigrette dressing , add cooled tortellini and reserved pasta water last
 - Toss to blend, refrigerate to combine flavors.
 - Top with additional cheese and ENJOY !!!
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Cucumber tomato avocado salad

Cucumber Tomato avocado salad

Cucumber tomato avocado salad drizzled with creamy Italian Vinaigrette is the perfect side dish to any summer meal!!! Quick, fresh, and delicious.

My mother served this easy cucumber and tomato salad most every night with dinner in the summer when the tomatoes were in season and it there peak flavor.

This tomato, avocado, onion and cucumber combo is delicious on its own on hot summer days when your craving something light. but pairs perfectly with bbq meals and crusty Italian bread.

Things to know when making cucumber, tomato avocado salad

Cucumbers: you can use Persian, English or regular

Tomatoes: My tomatoes aren't ready yet. I bought 2 heirloom tomatoes at the market for six dollars. It really pays off to grow whatever you can. Not only is it more affordable the flavor can't be bought.

red onion: Not only does it give the a salad a pop of color, but also a peppery taste. I like red onions on most salads

Avocado: Add a subtly nutty flavor with a hint of sweetness. They have a creamy, buttery texture that makes them a delicious addition to tomatoes and cucumbers.

Creamy Italian dressing brings it all together in the most

delicious way!!!

If you are looking for more summer salads try my refreshing watermelon cucumber feta salad or a summer favorite Italian pesto fusilli salad

Ingredients

- 2 peeled cucumbers
- 2 large heirloom tomatoes
- 1 medium avocado
- 1 sliced red onion
- 1/2 cup chopped Italian parsley
- 1/2 cup red wine vinegar
- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 1 Tbsp. minced garlic
- 1 Tbsp. Italian herb blend
- salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Start the prep by washing the cucumbers and tomatoes, peeling and dicing the red onion, mincing the garlic and peeling and slicing the avocado into medium size dice.
 2. Cut the cucumbers in medium large cubes
 3. Make the creamy Italian dressing. In a jar add the vinegar, olive oil, yogurt, minced garlic, Italian herbs and the salt and pepper.
 4. Shake well before coating the tomatoes , cucumbers, avocado and red onions with this creamy Italian vinaigrette.
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Italian Pesto Fusilli pasta Salad

Italian Pesto Fusilli pasta Salad

Just in time for Summer barbeques this Italian pesto Fusilli pasta salad is one of my old time favorites.

The first time I had this cold pasta salad was at one of my brothers outdoor get togethers. He and his wife Josie were great chefs, who entertained often in their home and the many different restaurants they owned and my leader in our own restaurant career and an inspiration in my recipes.

Back to this Italian rooted pesto fusilli it needs to be one of your go to pasta Summer pasta salads. Spiral shaped pasta coated with your favorite pesto sauce loaded with ingredients full of Italian flavors!!!

Three Tips when you make this Italian pesto fusilli pasta salad

The first tip when you make this Italian pesto fusilli pasta salad in this recipe the shape of the pasta as well as the quality is important. I use DeCecco fusilli the spirally shape as nooks and crannies for the pesto sauce.

Second you can use store bought or homemade sauce. If your going to use store bought go with a good quality. I use homemade whenever I can it's one of the staples I try to keep in my freezer year. If you want to go the store bought route this is a good alternative. <https://amzn.to/3a0ECZa>

Lastly run the fusilli under cold water to stop the cooking process and cool of the pasta before adding the rest of the cold ingredients.

One more thing this salad can be served cold or at room temperature.

Oh and please don.t forget to leave me a comment and tag me on Instagram. I love hearing from you it's my favorite part!!! If your looking for more delicious and easy to make pasta salads try my personal favorite Pesto Tortellini Pasta salad ready in minutes.

Ingredients

- 1/2 Lbs. fusilli pasta
- 1 cup prepared pesto sauce
- 1 cup sliced kalamite olives
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes
- 1 cup sliced English cucumber
- 2 cups fresh mozzarella balls
- 1 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/3 cup red wine vinegar
- Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Cook pasta according to package directions running it under cold water
2. In a bowl add the fusilli and pesto sauce mixing well
3. Add rest of ingredients up to the oil, vinegar and parmesan cheese
4. Now add the oil, vinegar and half the grated parmesan
5. Toss well top with remaining parmesan Enjoy!!!

Caesar Shrimp Pasta Salad

Caesar Shrimp Pasta Salad

This is an easy restaurant quality, 20 minute Caesar Shrimp pasta salad recipe that will become a Summertime classic in your kitchen!

Juicy quick- sautéed shrimp marinated in my classic delicious five star Caesar dressing, then tossed with rigatoni pasta and romaine lettuce.

When your looking for a quick lunch or a light dinner this is the pasta salad to make. It's a light and satisfying meal that can be made ahead of time making it perfect for busy weekday meals. The large shrimp make this pasta salad recipe impressive enough for Saturday night side dish with friends.

Variations for this Caesar shrimp pasta salad

In this Caesar Shrimp pasta salad I used rigatoni shape pasta. But any shape pasta works in this recipe, even gluten free or whole wheat. What ever pasta you choose be sure not to over cook it .

Stop the cooking process by running cold water over the pasta. This whole recipe is customizable from the pasta shape to what kind of lettuce you use.

If you don't like shrimp, chicken is delicious in this pasta salad recipe too!!

The one thing I wouldn't change in this recipe is the dressing,

the Caesar dressing makes this pasta salad burst with vibrant color and fresh Summer flavors.

This pasta salad is perfect for the warmer weather as a plain delicious side dish or add the shrimp or chicken and you have a perfect dinner.

If you make this please leave me a comment and don't forget to tag me on Instagram hearing from you is my favorite thing.

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Ingredients

- 1/2 Lb. rigatoni pasta
- 2 heads romaine lettuce
- 1 lb. large shrimp
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 1 cup my 5 star Caesar dressing
- 1 cup reserved pasta water
- 1 Tbs. butter
- Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Cook pasta according to package directions reserving 1 cup of the water
2. Meanwhile toss the shrimp in 1/2 cup of the Caesar dressing
3. In a saute pan melt the butter and add the shrimp Sauté 3 to 4 minutes set aside
4. Wash the romaine lettuce tear into medium size pieces
5. In a large bowl toss the cooled rigatoni pasta and lettuce with the remaining Caesar dressing
6. Mix in the parmesan cheese and shrimp

Black Pepper Italian Vinaigrette

Black Pepper Italian Vinaigrette

This black pepper Italian Vinaigrette recipe has more uses than just being a delicious salad dressing.

It's the perfect marinade for chicken, fish and roasted vegetables. The pungent taste of freshly ground pepper adds a restaurant quality flavor to this Italian inspired vinaigrette.

Once you make this Italian salad dressing/marinade you'll wonder what took so long, to go from so-so store bought Italian salad dressing to the Wow of a homemade vinaigrette.

Why Your going to love this black pepper Italian vinaigrette salad dressing

The first reason your going to love, love, this black pepper Italian vinaigrette is, it's delicious. This salad dressing is so good you won't want to buy store bought again.

Second, and just as important as the first reason, this

Italian vinaigrette is so easy to make you will make it often.

And third this easy salad dressing recipe uses few readily available ingredients, that together produce a vinaigrette you can use not only as a salad dressing but to marinate food when your craving Italian flavors.

One more thing this dressing will keep fresh in your fridge up to two weeks.

Lastly, you guys know I love hearing from you, it's my favorite part!! Please leave me a comment let me know your experience with this easy vinaigrette recipe. And please don't forget to tag me on Instagram with your creations!!! If your looking for more easy homemade vinaigrettes try one of my personal favorite Raspberry vinaigrette salad dressing or my black pepper Italian vinaigrette

Ingredients

- 2 Tbls. chopped garlic
- 2 Tbls. chopped onion
- 1 Tbls. fresh black ground pepper
- 1 Tbls. each honey and Dijon mustard
- 1/2 cup white wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 3 cups extra virgin olive oil
- 1 cup canola oil
- Salt to taste

Instructions

1. In a food processor add the all the ingredients up to the vinegar and olive oil
2. With the motor running slowly add the white wine vinegar and lemon juice
3. Then with the motor running pour in the olive oil in a

slow steady stream
4. ENJOY!!!

Five Star Caesar Dressing

Five Star Caesar Dressing

Some say you can judge how good the food is going to be in restaurants by the quality of the Caesar salad.

This five star Caesar dressing recipe is the same recipe on the restaurant menu where it earned 5 stars from the county food critic, after many failed attempts.

I had my first Caesar salad on a trip to Mexico with a childhood friend, before almost every restaurant had Caesar salads on their menus.

The taste and the fact that the servers put the whole Caesar salad together at your table while you watched started my search to duplicate the recipe. I must admit I was spectacle with the use of raw eggs, until it was explained the acid in vinegar and lemon juice tempers the eggs making them safe to eat.

This raw egg Caesar dressing recipe is the recipe we used in the restaurants for over 30 years and never had a problem.

Tips for success when Making Five

star Caesar dressing

By far the most important tip when you make this five star Caesar dressing or any oil based dressing is, the oil goes in last in a slow steady stream, with the motor of a food processor or blender running.

The other thing is, I don't add any salt to this Caesar salad dressing the ingredients provide enough salt, I don't find it necessary to add salt to the dressing.

And last please let me know your experience with this recipe, leave me a comment. I love hearing from you.

Ingredients

- 3 egg yolks
- 3 cups extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup white wine vinegar
- Juice from 1 lemon
- 1/2 cup anchovy fillets
- 1/2 cup parmesan cheese
- 2 Tbs. minced garlic
- 2 Tbs. Dijon mustard
- 1 Tsp. each hot sauce and Worcestershire sauce

Instructions

1. In a food processor with the motor running start with the egg yolks
2. Then add the vinegar and lemon juice
3. Add the rest of ingredients up to the olive oil
4. Now with the motor still running add the oil in a slow steady stream
5. ENJOY!!!!