

Broccoli Pasta Salad Recipe

This Broccoli Pasta Salad Recipe combines fresh, crunchy vegetables with tender pasta and a creamy, tangy dressing for the perfect make-ahead dish. It's colorful, satisfying, and simple to prepare, making it an ideal side for picnics, barbecues, or weekday meals. The mix of fresh broccoli, smoky bacon, and creamy dressing creates a balanced bite that's both hearty and refreshing.

Why You'll Love This Broccoli Pasta Salad Recipe

Perfect Balance of Flavors

This salad offers a combination of savory, sweet, and tangy flavors that complement each other beautifully. The creamy dressing brings everything together while letting the freshness of the broccoli and red onion shine.

Great for Meal Prep

It tastes even better the next day as the dressing absorbs into the pasta and vegetables. You can make it ahead for gatherings or prepare it as a ready-to-eat lunch that stays flavorful for days.

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- Author: [Aaron recipes](#)
- Total Time: [3 hours 30 minutes](#)
- Yield: [10 servings](#)
- Diet: [Vegetarian](#)

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Description

Creamy and crunchy Broccoli Pasta Salad with tender pasta, fresh broccoli, and crispy bacon tossed in a tangy, sweet dressing. A perfect make-ahead dish for any occasion.

Ingredients

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- ☐ Rotini pasta – 16 oz
 - ☐ Broccoli (chopped) – 1 lb
 - ☐ Red onion (diced) – ½ cup
 - ☐ Cooked bacon (crumbled) – ½ lb
 - ☐ Mayonnaise – 2 cups
 - ☐ Red wine vinegar – ½ cup
 - ☐ Granulated sugar – ½ cup
 - ☐ Salt – 2 tsp
 - ☐ Black pepper – 1 tsp
 - ☐ Cook Mode Prevent your screen from going dark
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Instructions

1. Cook the pasta according to package directions until al dente. Drain and let cool slightly.
2. While pasta cooks, chop broccoli and red onion and cook bacon until crispy. Crumble and set aside.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together mayonnaise, vinegar, sugar, salt, and pepper to make the dressing.
4. Combine the cooled pasta with the dressing. Add broccoli and onion, mixing until evenly coated.
5. Cover and refrigerate for at least 3 hours to let flavors develop.
6. Just before serving, stir in bacon and toss gently.
7. Serve chilled and enjoy.

Notes

Use fresh broccoli for the best crunch.

Chill the salad for at least 3 hours before serving.

Add extra vegetables like carrots or peppers for color.

Store in the fridge for up to 3 days.

- Prep Time: 15 minutes
- Cook Time: 15 minutes
- Category: Salad
- Method: Mixing
- Cuisine: American

Nutrition

- **Serving Size:** 1 cup
- **Calories:** 420
- **Sugar:** 8g
- **Sodium:** 400mg
- **Fat:** 28g
- **Saturated Fat:** 6g
- **Unsaturated Fat:** 18g
- **Trans Fat:** 0g
- **Carbohydrates:** 36g
- **Fiber:** 3g
- **Protein:** 5g
- **Cholesterol:** 25mg

Did you make this recipe?

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Choosing the Best Ingredients

Fresh Broccoli for Maximum Crunch

Always choose firm, bright green broccoli heads. Trim off the thick stems and use small florets for even mixing. The raw crunch balances perfectly with the tender pasta and creamy sauce.

Picking the Right Pasta

Rotini works best for this recipe because its spirals hold onto the dressing. If unavailable, try penne or bowtie pasta. Cook it until just al dente so it stays firm after chilling.

Preparing the Salad Components

Cooking the Pasta

Boil the pasta according to the package instructions. Once cooked, drain it well and let it cool slightly. You can drizzle a little oil on top to prevent the pasta from sticking together.

Prepping the Veggies and Bacon

While the pasta cooks, chop broccoli and red onion into bite-sized pieces. Cook the bacon until crispy, then crumble it. Keeping the bacon separate until serving helps it maintain its crunch.

Making the Dressing

Combining the Ingredients

In a bowl, whisk together mayonnaise, red wine vinegar, sugar, salt, and pepper. This dressing is creamy, sweet, and tangy, giving the salad its signature flavor.

Adjusting the Taste

Taste and tweak the flavor to your liking. Add more vinegar for tang, or a pinch of garlic powder for depth. For a lighter version, replace half the mayonnaise with Greek yogurt.

Assembling the Salad

Mixing Everything Together

In a large bowl, combine the cooled pasta with the dressing. Add broccoli and red onion, tossing gently until everything is evenly coated. The pasta should be glossy and well mixed, with dressing in every fold.

Adding the Finishing Touch

Refrigerate the salad for at least three hours so the flavors meld. Just before serving, sprinkle the crispy bacon over the top. This keeps it crunchy and adds the perfect salty bite.

Serving and Storage

Serving Suggestions

Serve the salad chilled as a side dish or light meal. It pairs wonderfully with grilled meats, sandwiches, or roasted vegetables. Garnish with fresh herbs like parsley or dill for a colorful presentation.

Storage Tips

Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to three days. If the dressing thickens after chilling, stir in a tablespoon of milk or vinegar to loosen it before serving again.

Recipe Variations

Add More Veggies

Feel free to customize this salad with additional vegetables. Cherry tomatoes, bell peppers, and shredded carrots add color and crunch. Sunflower seeds or toasted almonds can bring an extra layer of texture.

Make It Meat-Free

Skip the bacon for a vegetarian version. Add chickpeas or diced cheese instead for protein while keeping the flavor satisfying and rich.

FAQs About Broccoli Pasta Salad Recipe

Can I use frozen broccoli?

Fresh broccoli gives the best crunch and color, but thawed and well-drained frozen broccoli works in a pinch.

Can I make this salad ahead of time?

Yes, it's best made a few hours ahead so the flavors can blend. Just wait to add the bacon until serving.

How do I prevent the pasta from getting soggy?

Cook it just until al dente, drain well, and let it cool before mixing in the dressing. This keeps the texture firm.

What can I use instead of mayonnaise?

You can use a blend of Greek yogurt and olive oil or a light sour cream dressing for a healthier twist.

Conclusion

This Broccoli Pasta Salad Recipe is an easy, flavorful dish that delivers freshness and creaminess in every bite. The blend of pasta, crisp broccoli, and tangy dressing makes it a versatile choice for any occasion. It's quick to prepare, keeps well in the fridge, and brings comfort to the table with minimal effort. Whether you're planning a summer cookout or looking for a satisfying side dish, this salad is a winner every time.