

Choco Fever Dream

High-Protein Italian Pasta Salad

15 min Prep time	**12 min** Cook time	**27 min** Total time
4 Servings	**Easy** Difficulty	**Italian** Cuisine

Ingredients

Main Ingredients

- [ ] 12 oz whole-wheat rotini
- [ ] 2 chicken breasts, grilled and sliced
- [ ] 1 cup cooked chickpeas, rinsed
- [ ] 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- [ ] 1/2 cup diced red bell pepper
- [ ] 1/4 cup thinly sliced red onion
- [ ] 1/3 cup fresh basil leaves, torn
- [ ] 2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped

For the Dressing

- [ ] 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- [ ] 2 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- [ ] 1 tsp lemon zest
- [ ] 1 small garlic clove, minced
- [ ] 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- [ ] Salt and freshly cracked black pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Cook the rotini in salted water until al dente, then drain and rinse under cold water to stop cooking; drizzle with a little olive oil to keep grains separate.
2. Season the chicken breasts with salt, pepper, and a splash of lemon juice, then grill over medium-high heat for about 5-6 minutes per side until fully cooked; let rest and slice into strips.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together olive oil, lemon juice, zest, minced garlic, Dijon, salt, and pepper until the dressing emulsifies.
4. Add the cooled rotini, chickpeas, cherry tomatoes, red bell pepper, red onion, basil, and parsley to the bowl; toss gently to coat everything evenly with the dressing.
5. Fold in the sliced grilled chicken, give the salad one last gentle toss, and let it rest for 10 minutes before serving to allow flavors to meld.

Nutrition per serving

420 kcal Calories	**45 g** Carbs	**14 g** Fat

Tips & notes

- If the salad feels too dry, drizzle a bit more olive oil or a splash of lemon juice.
- For extra zing, grate a little Parmesan on top just before serving (optional).
- The salad tastes even better the next day as the vinaigrette deepens.