



... It's Worth the Trip!



THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Twisted Pasta Salad

Whole grains provide health benefits and they're usually packed with fiber to help you feel full longer. Numerous studies have shown that with a greater intake of whole grains, the risk for heart disease, obesity, type 2 diabetes and some forms of cancer decreases. This is why the **Dietary Guidelines for Americans** recommends that at least half your choices from the grain group be whole grain foods. At the very least, you should aim to consume at least three servings of whole grains per day.

Very few Americans meet the minimum level of daily intake. This is because many Americans believe whole grains just don't taste good, it's difficult to work them into their daily diet, or they believe they purchased whole grain products, when in fact they didn't. It is true, some whole grain food items may not taste that great, but remember eating whole grains doesn't have to be all or nothing. Try switching to items that may be less noticeable like whole wheat buns and snacking on popcorn. Food manufacturers are reformulating their products to contain whole grain(s) while maintaining the taste of the original products.

To find whole-grain foods, look at the ingredients list and for the word, "whole" before the grain(s), such as wheat, rye, barley, etc. Be cautious of foods that display words like "multigrain," "100% wheat," "organic," "pumpernickel," "bran," and "stone ground." Although these words may sound "healthy," it doesn't mean the product is whole grain. Aim to choose products where the whole grain is listed first on the ingredients list.

The grains listed in the last bullet may not be as familiar to you as the others; however, these grains have been around since ancient times. Unlike the other grains like wheat and corn, "Ancient Grains" have remained unchanged for thousands of years. "Ancient Grains" are nutrient powerhouses with some (like quinoa) being packed with protein. These versatile grains are quick and easy to prepare. They can be served as a side dish or mixed into salads, casseroles, burgers, breakfast meals, etc. Adding the nutty rich flavor of "Ancient Grains" into a healthy eating pattern is another strategy that can be used to help you meet the recommendations for whole grain intake, while adding variety to your diet.

This meal features two items that are whole-grain. Try the whole-wheat hotdog bun and quinoa. Use a pasta salad kit that contains quinoa to sample the tastiness of quinoa and then add fresh produce for even more healthy nutrients.

Use the following list to guide you in choosing products made of whole grains:

- Whole oats/oatmeal, whole wheat flour, whole-grain barley, and/or whole rye
- Popcorn
- Brown rice or wild rice
- Quinoa, millet, bulgur, triticale, chai seeds, buckwheat, sorghum, amaranth and farro



Directions:

1. Begin cooking the pasta/quinoa salad kit according to package directions.
2. While the pasta salad is cooking, wash and dry a medium sized yellow squash and green zucchini squash; and, drain and rinse one can of sliced olives.
3. Finish preparing the pasta salad according to package directions and then let cool while the remainder of the meal is prepared.
4. In a large bowl, gently mix together 1- 32 oz. container of vanilla flavored Greek yogurt and 6-8 oz. of blueberries.
5. Cook 4 hot dogs as desired (boiled or grilled—according to package instructions).
6. Add the cut up vegetables and drained, sliced olives to the pasta salad kit.

Serves: 4

7. On each plate, serve one hotdog in a bun (if desired, warm the buns in the microwave for 8 seconds each) and ¼ of the quinoa pasta salad. Serve the yogurt/berries in a small bowl.

NOTES:

- Experiment mixing in your favorite vegetables and carry the pasta salad to your next office party or picnic.
- If hot dogs are not your thing, substitute a grilled hamburger made with 90 percent lean ground beef on a whole wheat bun.
- Cook a frozen stir-fry blend of vegetables and mix into the salad kit and serve warm with your favorite type of lean beef.

DISCLAIMER: YOU MAY USE ANY LIKE PRODUCTS OF ANY BRAND IN MAKING THIS HEALTHY CHOICE MEAL. THE PICTURES HERE ARE NOT AN ENDORSEMENT OF THESE PRODUCTS.

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