

Hot Summer's Night In Barcelona Macaroni & Cheese Salad

Serves 4

From my book, "Macaroni and Cheese" (Chronicle Books, 2005).

12 ounces small elbow macaroni
4 cloves garlic
1 roasted red bell pepper from a jar
1½ to 2 teaspoons pure chile powder such as ancho or New Mexico chile powder
1 teaspoon Spanish pimentón or sweet paprika combined with a few shakes of chipotle hot sauce such as Tabasco or Bufala brand
½ cup mayonnaise
½ cup fresh cilantro leaves
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
3 tablespoons tomato paste, or to taste
About 1 teaspoon sherry vinegar or red wine vinegar
Kosher salt, to taste

4 to 6 green onions, both the green and white parts, thinly sliced
12 cherry tomatoes, halved or quartered
6 ounces diced white cheese such as Hispanic panela, Pecorino fresco or barrel-aged feta

Instructions: Cook the pasta in a large pot of salted boiling water until al dente, and drain. Rinse with cold water and set aside in a large bowl. You want the pasta to be room temperature before you dress it.

In a food processor or blender, puree the garlic with the roasted red pepper then add the chile powder, pimentón, mayonnaise

and cilantro and whirl until smooth. Whisk in the olive oil, tomato paste and sherry vinegar until it reaches a smooth thickened consistency. Season with salt and set aside.

The pasta may stick together as it cools, but not to worry, when you add the dressing it all comes together. Add half the dressing at first, then when all of the macaroni is moistened, add the rest. Toss in the green onions, cherry tomatoes and cheese.

Eat right away, or chill until ready to serve.

Per serving: 215 calories, 6 g protein, g carbohydrate, g fat (g saturated), mg cholesterol, mg sodium, g fiber.