

## Pasta Salad with Artichoke Hearts and Kalamata Olives

This is a quick and easy cold pasta salad. The garden style rotini makes it a very colorful dish. To add some protein, you can add some cubed cooked chicken for a great warm weather meal. It also is easy to pack for a school lunches.

- 1 package garden style rotini pasta
- 2 tablespoons salt
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- 1 14 ounce can artichoke hearts
- 1 cup Kalamata olives chopped
- ½ green bell pepper diced
- ¼ cup red onion diced
- 2 cloves garlic minced
- 2 tablespoons Italian seasoning

Cook the pasta in boiling water with the salt. Always cook pasta in water that is at a rolling boil with some salt. This is your only chance to actually flavor the pasta. Some people like to add a little olive oil to the water. While it will help prevent the water from boiling over, I haven't found a noticeable difference in flavor. The oil floats on top of the water and the pasta is down below so it doesn't get much chance to absorb flavors. Drain the pasta when done.

While the pasta is still warm, add all of the remaining ingredients except the salt - is only for cooking the pasta. Mix well and chill for at least 2 hours. This will allow the flavors to meld. Serve with some crusty bread for a great meal. Mangia, Mangia!