



Pasta Salad Delight! This is an easy recipe for a lunch or dinner! It can be made in advance and served when the crowd wants to eat. It is one of Jane's favorites!



Ingredient List:

- 1 Dozen extra large/jumbo shrimp (*fresh, local caught is best...avoid farm raised Asian prawns or frozen raw shrimp - wild shrimp from the Gulf of Mexico are my favorite*)
- Bell pepper, 1/2 of a regular size BP
- Crimini mushrooms (aka Portobello when they get big), 8 medium size
- Vidalia or sweet Hawaiian onion
- Carrots, 2 medium sized or one large
- Celery, 2 fresh stalks
- Black Olives, 1 can of jumbo sized black olives (6 oz can)
- Garlic, 1 garlic bulb or jar of diced garlic
- Tomatoes, sun dried
- Cranberries, dried (Craisens!)
- Dates, dried and chopped
- Walnuts, raw or dry roasted
- Penne pasta
- Garlic powder

Recipes for Kreta Reserve EVOO From the Kitchen of Rip Kirby

Coarse or low-sodium sea salt (*yes, there is such a thing despite the fact that salt is, by definition, sodium chloride and all of it has been in the sea at one time or another...the important detail is its greater coarseness and lower iodine levels compared with "normal" salt in a shaker*)

Pepper (*as in fresh cracked pepper of any type you like*)

Italian herb blend (*I use Gourmet Garden brand in a 4 oz tube. It must be refrigerated.*)

Balsamic vinegar

Honey (*I like Orange Blossom or Tupelo Clover brands, but Aunt Sue or the Bear will do...locally produced and fresh is best if you can find it.*)

Kreta Reserve Extra Virgin Olive Oil

Portuguese Sweet Bread (*optional*)

Wine: Rothschild's Mouton Cadet Blanc (France), 2007 Bordeaux Appellation (40% Sauvignon Blanc, 50% Semillion, 10% Muscadelle); or Veramonte Reserva 2007 Sauvignon Blanc from Casablanca Valley, Chile; winery details at www.bpdr.com; recommended internet retailer is www.wines.com (ask for Buckley Wineholt and tell him you know me) if your local wine source thinks MadDog 2020 is good with everything.

Preparation Instructions:

- 1) Clean the shrimp. Remove heads, peel, and de-vein 1 dozen large/jumbo Gulf shrimp (30 count). Rinse and drain the shrimp to ensure no wayward shells are left. Raw shrimp will be cooked after seasoning. Frozen shrimp that are already cooked, cleaned, and ready-to-eat do not need to be reheated, but they do need to be at room temp when added to the pasta.
- 2) Season the raw shrimp. Add two teaspoons of powdered garlic, one-half teaspoon of cracked pepper, a dash of sea salt, and 2 tablespoons of Kreta Reserve EVOO to a bowl and stir. Add the shrimp and stir to coat. Cover with plastic wrap and set aside for 20 minutes in the fridge to marinate. If you like your shrimp spicy hot, add some red pepper flakes.
- 3) Prep the pasta. While the shrimp are marinating, get your pasta pot going and cook some penne pasta. This recipe will make two hearty servings or four regular servings out of 5-7 ounces (about 1/3 of a one pound box) of penne pasta. Add some salt and olive oil to the water and bring it to a boil. Add the pasta to the boiling water and stir to get the pasta coated with the oil in the water. Reduce heat to a very low boil. Put a lid on the pot...if it boils over, your heat is too high and/or you didn't add the oil to the water. Cook for about 9 minutes to create the al dente texture. Once cooked, drain the water and let the pasta cool in the strainer as it completes the draining process and cooks a little as it cools down. Stir or shake the pasta in the strainer after a couple of minutes to make sure it is not sticking together. If it is stuck together, rinse the pasta in the strainer under hot water in the sink, shake the water out, drizzle some oil on it, stir, and then let it drain again.
- 4) Prep the anti-pasta ingredients.
 - 1) For the bell pepper, cut in half and clean the seeds and membranes out. Slice into julienne strips. Cut these strips in half. Set aside.
 - 2) For the mushrooms, clean under running water (yeah, yeah, I know about mushroom soaking up water, but personally, I don't like eating steer manure or any other kind of compost for that matter), dry off with a paper towel, then cut off the stem at the base of the cap. This will leave a flat surface. Slice the mushroom cap into medium-thin slices (about 8-10 slices per cap). Set aside.
 - 3) Use about a third of the sweet onion, a little more if you like onions. If the onion fits into your hand like a baseball, use half...if it is bigger, use less. Cut your

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- onion section in half, lay the flat side down and make very thin slices of onion of these sections. No large chunks or slices, the thin strands work great. Set aside.
- 4) For the carrots, clean and peel two medium sized whole carrots. Using a hand held peeler, shave peelings from the carrot until you can't peel anything. Eat the carrot stub. After you chew and swallow, dance on one foot and say "woo-woo-woo" and then set the carrots aside. If anyone is in the kitchen with you, tell them you were having flashbacks to your baby days when you first ate carrots.
 - 5) Take two stalks of celery, clean these under running water, and cut off the ends to remove the old, oxidized surface. Cut down the length of each stalk to split these into 4 pieces. Slice these with a diagonal cut to create small cross-sections of celery. Thickness is at your discretion, but not too thin because you want the celery to crunch in your mouth...also, not too thick because you don't want to be overwhelmed by the celery taste...you want it just right. Make sure Goldilocks is nearby to check this measurement for you.
 - 6) Black olives come in a 6 oz can and are already pitted. Open the can and drain the olives. You can buy black olives with pits, but why use these unless you are going to have a pit spitting contest? I like jumbo size olives because these tend to resist damage from handling during the canning process.
 - 7) Chop some garlic, or...take a fork and grab some from your jar of diced garlic you keep in the fridge. You will need a tablespoon of diced garlic. Put this into a jar or bowl for mixing with the oil and vinegar.
 - 8) Sun dried tomatoes come in many varieties. I like Roma, but I will use whatever is being sold that day in the grocery store. You will need about 4-5 dried tomato sections to create a small handful of cut-up dried tomatoes. Before you cut these up, inspect the tops for any leftover stalks or other woody material at the top of the dried tomato section. Bunch these into a group and cut these into bite size chunks. Set aside.
 - 9) Walnuts, craisens (dried cranberries) and chopped dates come in resealing bags. You won't use the whole bag, hence the reason I buy the resealing bag brand. Measure out a tablespoon or two of the craisens and the dates. These ingredients add sweetness to the pasta salad. Adjust your measurement accordingly. Depending on the size and type of the walnut, about a third of a cup is fine...a little more if the walnuts are raw instead of dry roasted.
- 5) Make the oil and vinegar dressing. In a small jar or mixing bowl, place 2 teaspoons of balsamic vinegar, 1/2 teaspoon of garlic powder, 1/8 teaspoon of cracked pepper, a pinch of sea salt, 1 teaspoon of Italian herb blend, and 1 teaspoon of honey. Mix until honey is dissolved. Add another 2 teaspoons of vinegar if you want an extra zing to the dressing. Add a tablespoon of Kreta Reserve olive oil. Mix until the oil is emulsified with the vinegar. Once that oil has been mixed and the dressing is smooth, add one more tablespoon of Kreta Reserve olive oil and repeat. The dressing should be a smooth mixture with no streaks of oil floating to the surface. You can do this with a mini-whisk in a small bowl, or use a small jar with a lid and shake the ingredients into submission. Personally, I like the jar method...I use a recycled glass jar that contained sliced mushrooms in its previous life...the lid doesn't leak and it seems to be the right size for shaking with one hand or two. Once complete, set aside, but do not refrigerate unless you are making this well in advance of use. If you are making this in advance, you must refrigerate the dressing to store it. When you are ready to use it, let the dressing warm up to room temp. This is enough for the 2-4 person pasta, however, you may wish to increase the tartness with extra balsamic once everything is mixed together. You can always add extra spice, vinegar, and oil to suit your taste after it is all mixed together.

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- 6) Prep the bread. Place the Portuguese Sweet Bread on a baking sheet and pre-heat the oven in accordance with the directions on the bread bag label (the bread will be in the oven for 12-14 minutes..it is during this time that you will be getting everything ready for plating). Drizzle some Kreta Reserve olive oil on the bread. Take a basting brush and spread the oil over the top of the bread to create a shiny surface covering (as best you can) the nooks and crannies in addition to the smoother surface.

Cooking and Plating Instructions:

By now, the oven should be pre-heated and your pan should be ready to cook.

- 1) Place the Portuguese Sweet Bread into the oven for 12-14 minutes (or as indicated by the directions on the bag) just in advance of serving the food. Warm bread with a chilled pasta salad is hard to beat.
- 2) Place a tablespoon of oil and the shrimp in a sautee pan over a medium-low heat (just enough to make the oil sizzle a bit). Cover and let cook for 3 minutes. Do not overcook. After the shrimp turn pink (about 1-2 minutes) turn them over to cook the other side and cover the pan. After three minutes, turn off the heat and leave in the pan for another minute or until the oil stops splattering. Remove the cover to allow the shrimp to cool slowly. Turn the shrimp after a minute or two.
- 3) By now, the pasta should be approaching room temp. Put the pasta in a large bowl for mixing all the ingredients. Add the shrimp and drain any of the oil in the pan into the shrimp and pasta. Stir to coat the pasta with the shrimp oil. Add the onions, bell pepper, celery, sun dried tomatoes, and most of the dressing. Stir and toss to coat all the ingredients with the dressing. Now add the olives, craisens, dates, and walnuts. Stir and toss. Add the sliced mushrooms and the carrot peelings. Drizzle the remaining dressing on the mushrooms and carrots. Stir and toss gently. Taste the pasta to make sure the spice level is right for you. If you want more bite, add some balsamic vinegar...if it is too much vinegar, add some oil mixed with a teaspoon of sugar and some cracked pepper. Stir and toss gently to avoid breaking up the mushrooms. Cover with plastic wrap and place in the fridge to cool off prior to serving. This also lets the flavors absorb throughout the ingredients.
- 4) Plate the pasta salad in a soup or salad bowl on a dinner plate so there is room for bread on the side. For additional flavor, take a bread plate and drizzle some Kreta Reserve on the plate. Add some chopped garlic, cracked pepper, a pinch of salt, and a dab of the Italian herbs from the tube. Mix with a fork. This will replace the need for butter on the bread.
- 5) Serve with a white wine with a bit of a fruity bouquet. (see ingredient list above)

Depending on whether you served appetizers, this will feed two-four people. Enjoy!

NOTE: You can substitute other shellfish like lobster or crawfish for the shrimp. Tuna can also be used, but...if you use tuna do not mix the tuna with the pasta salad. Instead, place the tuna on top of the pasta salad after it has been plated into a bowl. The tuna will not keep well as a leftover with the other ingredients. If you want to use chicken (especially grilled chicken), cook your chicken to taste, let it cool, cut it into strips or cubes and substitute it for the shrimp. For vegans, add Garbanzo beans and grilled corn (cut off the cob after grilling) to replace the meats.