

Pasta salad with courgette and peas, chilli, basil & mint

This is a favourite recipe to take to any “bring & share” lunch – it’s popular with vegetarians and non-vegetarians alike, and can be made the day before. If you think there may be vegans coming, omit the cheese or serve it separately. The lemon zest and the mint are important.

Serves 4

Ingredients

350g Farfalle (butterfly-shaped pasta)

150g frozen peas

Salt & pepper

Olive oil

50-70g hard cheese (parmesan, pecorino, Gran Padano or similar), half grated, half not

4 medium courgettes

1 handful nuts, dry-roasted in a frying-pan (I use cashews or peanuts, but toasted seeds would work too)

Zest of ½ a lemon

1 “birdseye” chilli, deseeded and finely diced

½ bunch fresh mint leaves

½ bunch fresh basil leaves



Method

Cook the pasta in boiling salted water, and 3 minutes before it’s ready add the peas to the pot. Cook for 3 minutes, drain and tip into a bowl with some salt, pepper, a good drizzle of oil, and the grated cheese if using. Set aside.

Top and tail each courgette and slice thinly lengthways with a cheese slicer or mandolin. You now have a choice:

- Use the courgette slices uncooked (healthiest)
- Fry the slices a few at a time in a little olive oil (quickest cooked)
- Get a griddle pan really hot, brush it with olive oil and lay slices on it, turning to cook both sides (tastiest). This is what I do.

Add to the pasta with the nuts, lemon zest and chillies and mix.

Take the herbs with you in a container. Just before serving, rip up and add the mint and basil leaves and stir gently through. (If you add them any earlier they may go black.) Add a little more olive oil if you like, and taste for seasoning. Use the cheese slicer or a potato peeler to shave slices off the remaining lump of cheese and scatter over the top.

Serve warm or cold.