

Elote Macaroni Salad – Comfort du Jour

You don't have to visit Mexico to experience the delicious combination of flavors in elote, the beloved Mexican street food staple that is roasted fresh corn on the cob, seasoned with spices, lime and grated cheese. Here's a pasta side salad that captures the essence of this simple street food. Roasted corn, cheese, spice—it's a whole different level of comfort. Easy to put together, and mixing up south-of-the-border flavor with a timeless classic American comfort food, the macaroni salad.

INGREDIENTS

- 12 oz. pkg. casarecce pasta* (see notes)
- 2 ears freshly grilled corn*
- 1/2 cup red onion, chopped
- 1 average-size jalapeno, seeded and diced
- 3 scallions, trimmed and grilled
- Handful fresh cilantro, rough chopped for serving
- Crumbled feta or parmesan cheese for serving
- Additional slices fresh jalapeno (optional, for garnish)
- 1 small ripe avocado, cut into cubes

DRESSING

- 1/4 cup canola mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup light sour cream
- Juice of 1/2 lime
- 1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil (or avocado oil)
- 3/4 tsp. ground chipotle
- 1/2 tsp. cumin
- 1/2 tsp. sweet smoked paprika
- Freshly cracked black pepper

*NOTES

Casarecce pasta is a long, shaped noodle that looks like a rolled-up rectangle. I like it here because it has a firm texture and anchors all the other ingredients, which are cut into smaller pieces. Any large-sized pasta with texture will work in its place though, including penne, rotini or farfalle (bow ties).

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Grilling fresh corn is one of our simplest summer food pleasures. We strip the husk and silk, and then smear with softened butter, salt and pepper. Wrap them up in foil and grill on direct 300-350° F heat for about 30 minutes. If you prefer, you could also pick up some frozen roasted corn and thaw completely before using (pat it dry, too). You will need about 1 1/2 cups.

INSTRUCTIONS

Cook pasta according to package directions. Cut kernels from corn and prep all other vegetables while pasta is cooking.

Combine dressing ingredients in a small bowl or glass measuring cup, whisk or stir until smooth. If dressing seems very thick, add another tablespoon of olive oil.

Drain pasta and toss to evaporate excess moisture. Add a small amount of the dressing and toss to coat. This helps to prevent the pasta sticking together. Let the pasta cool a few minutes, then add corn, jalapeno and red onion to the pasta bowl. Pour in remaining dressing and toss to combine. Chill until cold, at least one hour.

To serve, top salad with parmesan or finely crumbled feta, avocado, jalapeno slices and cilantro.