



Whole Wheat Rotini Pasta With Fresh Ramp Pesto and Tomato Medley

8 ounces organic whole wheat rotini
1 teaspoon salt if desired
3 strips bacon
3 Tablespoons balsamic pear infused vinegar
Salt and black pepper to taste
Fresh Ramp Pesto (see attached recipe)
1 small bunch dandelion greens, torn into thirds
6 ounces gourmet medley petite tomatoes, halved
2 ounces feta cheese, cut into cubes
Thai Basil Sprig for garnish

Place about 3 to 4 quarts water and salt in large pot; bring to a rapid boil. Stir rotini pasta into boiling water. Cook to boiling; stir occasionally for about 10 to 12 minutes or desired tenderness.

In 10-inch nonstick skillet, cook bacon strips until brown and crisp. Remove bacon, cook; crumble. Add vinegar to the bacon; season with salt and pepper; set aside.

Drain cooked pasta; save about 1/2 cup pasta water. Rinse pasta in hot water for hot pasta and cold water for cold pasta.

Toss ramp pesto with pasta; add crumbled bacon; use reserved water if needed for moister consistency.

Place dandelion leaves on platter; drizzle with quarter of bacon dressing. Spoon pasta on platter over dandelion leaves. Toss tomatoes in bacon dressing; arrange over top of pasta. Add cubes of feta; top with basil sprig. Serve warm or room temperature.

Serves: 4 to 6

About the Recipe: Curly whole wheat pasta swirl in onion garlic herbed flavored pesto spooned over lightly bitter dandelion leaves, drizzled with bacon dressing. Juicy petite tomatoes and creamy feta cheese are spooned over the top. Serve with salad tongs to gather all the layers of goodness. Serve it warm or room temperature.

Fresh Ramp Pesto

1 Tablespoon olive oil

1/3 cup thinly sliced ramps

1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese

1/4 cup dry roasted almonds

1 Tablespoon fine chopped Thai basil or tarragon

1/4 cup olive oil

Place oil in hot 10 inch nonstick skillet. Add ramps; sauté for 1 minute until green color brightens. Remove to food processor. Add grated cheese, almonds, and tarragon; process to fine chop. With machine running, drizzle in olive oil until almost smooth. Place in bowl; season with salt and pepper.

About the Recipe: With just a whirl in your food processor, you can create an easy fresh herb, onion garlic pesto that is perfect to toss into your pasta.