

BLT Powerhouse Pasta Salad

4 servings

2 cups uncooked wheat-blend rotini pasta (such as Healthy Harvest)
1 Tbsp olive oil
1 medium red onion, chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
1 bag (4 oz) fresh baby spinach
1/4 c shredded Parmesan cheese
1/4 c Bacon bits



- 1) Cook pasta according to package. Drain, but save ½ cup of the cooking water.
- 2) Meanwhile, heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onion and garlic. Cook, stirring often, until onion is golden - about 5 minutes.
- 3) Add tomatoes to skillet and cook until tomatoes begin to soften but still hold their shape, about 5 minutes. Add reserved pasta cooking water to tomato mixture in skillet and bring to a boil.
- 4) Place spinach in a large bowl. Pour hot tomato mixture over spinach. Add pasta, parmesan cheese and bacon bits and toss to combine. Serve warm or cold.

Nutrition facts per serving: 310 kcals, 7g total fat, 2g saturated fat, 10mg cholesterol, 360mg sodium, 51g carbohydrates, 7g dietary fiber, 14g protein
Good source of Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Calcium, Iron, and dietary fiber

Nutrition Note: Dark green leafy vegetables like spinach, romaine lettuce, kale & Swiss chard, are a nutritional powerhouse. They are loaded with nutrients such as **phytochemicals** that reduce the risk of cancer and heart disease, **folate** to help the body form Red Blood Cells (RBC), **fiber** to reduce blood cholesterol levels and keep the GI tract healthy, and **vitamin C** to help heal wounds and maintain teeth and gums. The darker the leaves, the more nutrients the vegetable has. Use raw leaf vegetables in salads, sandwiches & wraps, or use them to wrap other ingredients like a tortilla. Add them to your favorite stir-fry or steam them in the microwave for a tasty side dish. Strive to eat at least 5 servings of fruit and vegetables every day!

Recipe provided by Keri Tonia, MSU Dietetics Student, 3/07.