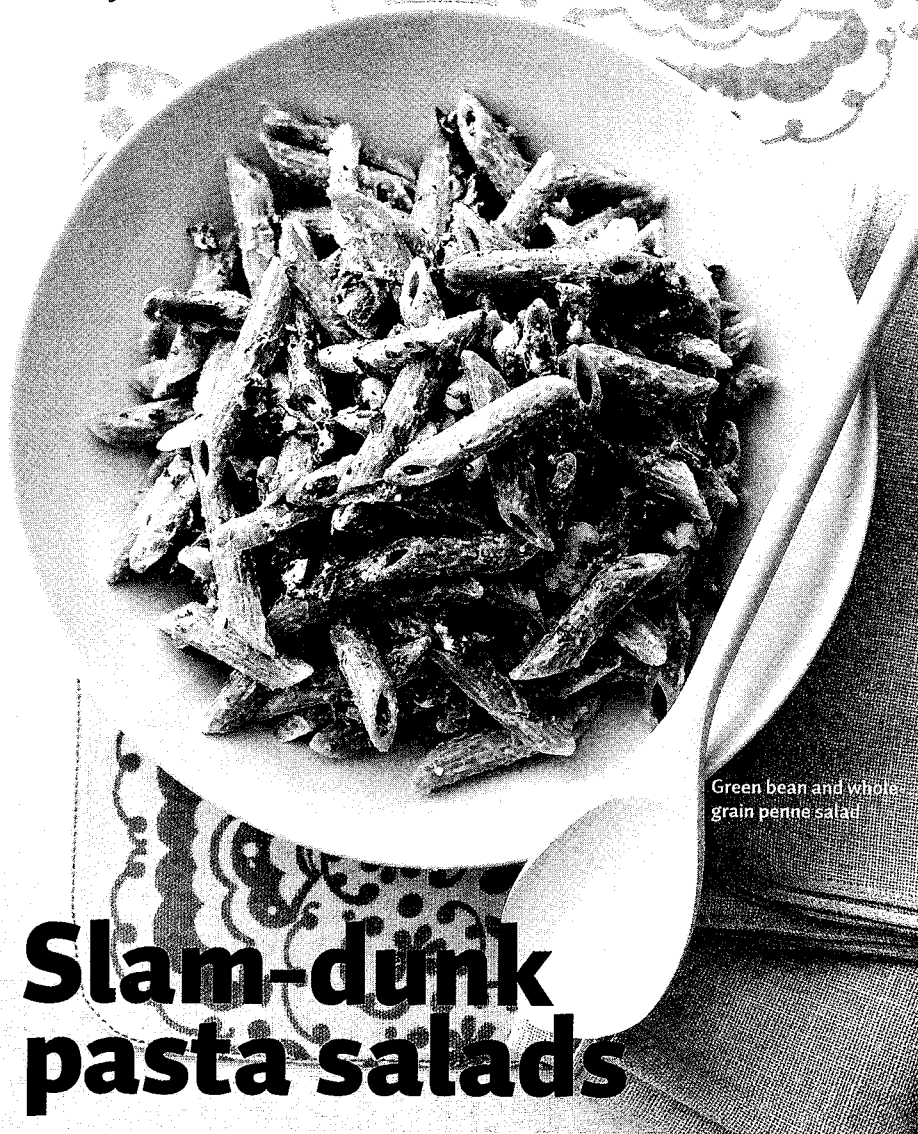


3 ways with



Green bean and whole-grain penne salad

Slam-dunk pasta salads

Foolproof recipes and simple techniques will make you the star of picnics and potlucks all summer long

BY STEPHANIE DEAN PHOTOGRAPHS BY LEO GONG FOOD STYLING BY DAN BECKER

WHAT COULD BE SIMPLER to make than pasta salad? Isn't it just about the most basic summertime dish there is? Well, no. I know this because on the way to making good pasta salads, I've made a few gloppy messes and others that were glop-free but dull. (For my secrets to sensational salads, see page 100.) Of the three recipes here, the green bean, blue cheese, and bacon combo is my favorite, but I think you'll enjoy them all.

Green bean and whole-grain penne salad

This salad is all about contrasts in flavor and texture: chewy, nutty pasta mingled with

crisp, sweet green beans and strewn with bits of crunchy bacon and creamy Roquefort.

PREP AND COOK TIME 40 minutes

MAKES 16 side-dish servings

NOTES Ingredients can be prepped and pasta cooked a day ahead of time and chilled (add 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil to the cooked pasta). Toss everything together just before serving. The dressing can be made ahead too; if it thickens, thin it with a little more vinegar or even milk.

1½ lbs. green beans, stems trimmed and cut into 1½-in. lengths

16 oz. whole-grain penne, rotini, rotelle, or fusilli pasta

½ cup mayonnaise

About ½ lb. Roquefort cheese

2 tbsp. red wine vinegar

3 tbsp. each finely chopped flat-leaf parsley and finely chopped chives

5 crisply cooked thick slices bacon, crumbled

½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

Salt

1. Bring 2 large pots of salted water to a boil. Prepare a large bowl of ice and cold water. In one pot, boil green beans 3 minutes; drain and plunge in ice water to stop cooking. In the other, cook pasta until tender to the bite, 9 to 12 minutes or according to package directions. Drain and rinse thoroughly under cold water until completely cool (see Notes).

2. In a food processor, pulse mayonnaise, Roquefort, and vinegar until well combined but still slightly chunky.

3. In a large bowl, toss together pasta, green beans, Roquefort dressing, parsley, chives, bacon, and pepper until pasta is well coated. Season with salt to taste.

PER 1-CUP SERVING 214 CAL., 42% (90 CAL.) FROM FAT; 7.9 G PROTEIN; 10 G FAT (3.3 G SAT.); 24 G CARBO (4.1 G FIBER); 363 MG SODIUM; 15 MG CHOL.