

## Domenica Cooks

### SHRIMP AND ORZO SALAD

I bought a box of Wegman's whole-wheat orzo a couple of years ago on a whim. It was summer, so naturally orzo salad came to mind, though, being more of a [rice salad](#) person, I'd never made one. A google search turned up [this recipe from Ina Garten](#), which pairs the plump little slivers of pasta with broiled shrimp in a lemon vinaigrette. I like Ina's recipes; they're uncomplicated, if indulgent, and they work. I used her recipe as my starting point and made a few changes, scaling down the amount of orzo and dressing while adding more supporting ingredients—cherry tomatoes, olives, bite-size “ciliegine” mozzarella balls, and some leftover grilled zucchini. The orzo, slippery as melon seeds, happily soaked up the lemon dressing and the flavors from the shrimp and vegetables. In other words, the salad was good. Now I buy whole-wheat orzo with intention.

With the summer growing season in full swing, you can easily customize this salad to your own liking. I've made it a few times now, each time with a different mix of vegetables. During corn season I always toss in some leftover kernels cut from the cob. Sweet peppers, raw, roasted, or pickled, are also nice. Let your garden or local farmers' market be your guide. As for the shrimp, you can grill them instead of broil. Or substitute with chunks of grilled salmon.

Makes 4 to 6 servings

#### INGREDIENTS

- 8 ounces (227 g) whole-wheat orzo
- 1/3 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice (from 1 large or 2 small lemons)
- 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more as needed
- 1 teaspoon fine sea salt, or to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 pound (455 g) medium shrimp, peeled (except for the tails) and deveined
- Pinch of crushed red pepper flakes
- 6 baby zucchini (or 3 medium), halved lengthwise
- 12 “ciliegine” mozzarella balls
- 1/2 pint cherry tomatoes, cut in half
- 1 small red onion, cut into small dice
- 1 medium cucumber, peeled, seeded, and cut into bite-sized pieces
- 2/3 cup (100 g) Kalamata olives, pitted and halved
- 1/2 cup (100 g) good Greek feta, crumbled into large chunks
- Handful of chopped fresh herbs, such as basil, marjoram, mint, oregano, and dill; plus some sprigs for garnish

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Preheat the oven to broil and arrange a rack in the top third, about 4 inches from the heating element.
2. Fill a medium pot with water. Bring to a boil and salt it generously. Pour in the orzo and stir to prevent it from clumping. Boil for 8 to 9 minutes, until al dente. Drain and pour into a large bowl. Whisk together the lemon juice, olive oil, 1 teaspoon oil and a few grindings of pepper. Pour all but a few tablespoons over the hot orzo and stir well.
3. Place the shrimp on a sheet pan; drizzle with a couple of tablespoons of olive oil and season lightly with salt and crushed red pepper. Toss to combine and spread out in a single layer. Broil for 3 to 4 minutes, until cooked through. Don't overcook or you'll end up with tough shrimp. Remove from the oven but leave the broiler on.
4. Arrange the zucchini halves, cut side up, on a baking sheet. Brush with a little olive oil and season lightly with salt and pepper. Broil for 4 to 5 minutes, until browned and just tender. (If you're using larger zucchini, cut them into 2-inch pieces after broiling.)
5. Add the shrimp and zucchini to the orzo, along with the mozzarella, cherry tomatoes, onion, cucumber, olives, feta, and chopped herbs. Drizzle on the reserved dressing and gently fold everything together. Set aside at room temperature for an hour to give the flavors a chance to mingle. Or, to serve cold, refrigerate for a couple of hours or overnight. Garnish with herb sprigs and serve.