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Description

Creamy Seafood and Pasta Salad combines tender pasta, succulent seafood, crunchy vegetables, and a smooth, tangy dressing in one satisfying dish. Each bite offers a delicious balance of creamy texture, refreshing crunch, and savory seafood flavor. It is ideal for potlucks, picnics, family lunches, or a make-ahead meal. Seafood provides valuable protein, while Greek yogurt can lighten the dressing and add extra protein. Although traditional pasta makes this salad relatively high in carbohydrates, you can adapt the ingredients for a lower-carb version that better suits your eating preferences.

Can This Creamy Seafood and Pasta Salad Support Weight Loss Goals?

This salad can fit into a balanced eating plan when you pay attention to portion sizes and dressing ingredients. Shrimp and crab provide protein, which can help make a meal more satisfying, while vegetables add crunch and volume. Using plain Greek yogurt in place of

some mayonnaise can increase protein and reduce the amount of added fat. For a lighter serving, measure the dressing, choose lean seafood, and include extra celery, cucumber, or bell pepper. The pasta contributes carbohydrates, so this recipe is not automatically suitable for strict low-carb or keto plans.

Does Creamy Seafood and Pasta Salad Fit a High-Protein Lifestyle?

Seafood such as shrimp and crab supplies protein, making this salad a useful starting point for a protein-focused lunch.

Plain Greek yogurt can increase protein in the creamy dressing, while mayonnaise adds richness but little protein.

Regular pasta contributes most of the carbohydrates, so the net carbs will depend on the pasta type and serving size.

For a lower-carb variation, replace some or all of the pasta with chopped cucumber, celery, or a suitable low-carb pasta alternative.

The estimated nutrition below is for the version made with shrimp, imitation crab, regular pasta, and a yogurt-mayonnaise dressing.

My Personal Experience

These points describe the recipe's expected qualities rather than claiming personal kitchen testing.

- Creamy, tangy dressing: A combination of mayonnaise, Greek yogurt, lemon juice, and Dijon mustard gives the salad a smooth, bright flavor.
The dressing coats the pasta and seafood without needing a complicated sauce.
- A satisfying seafood texture: Tender shrimp and imitation crab add a delicate, savory bite.
Chilling the salad allows the flavors to mingle while keeping the seafood and pasta distinct.
- Fresh crunch in every serving: Celery, bell pepper, and red onion contrast nicely with the creamy dressing.
Finely chopping the vegetables helps distribute their flavor throughout the salad.
- Convenient make-ahead preparation: The ingredients can be prepared in advance and mixed before serving.
Keeping the salad refrigerated helps preserve its freshness and food safety.

Perfect For

- High-protein lunches: Shrimp, crab, and Greek yogurt contribute protein in a convenient chilled meal.
- Summer gatherings: The cool, creamy salad is well suited to warm-weather lunches and potlucks when kept properly chilled.
- Meal prep: Portion the salad into individual containers for convenient lunches.
- Family picnics: Its combination of pasta, seafood, and crunchy vegetables makes a satisfying side or main dish.
- Balanced eating plans: Pair a moderate serving with extra vegetables for a more filling plate.
- Low-carb adaptations: Use less pasta or substitute a suitable lower-carb alternative and add more seafood and vegetables.
- Keto diet plans: The standard recipe is generally too high in carbohydrates for strict keto eating, but a modified version can reduce the pasta significantly.

Why You'll Love This Recipe

- A creamy, refreshing flavor: Greek yogurt, mayonnaise, lemon, and mustard create a balanced dressing.
The slight tang complements the sweet, delicate flavor of the seafood.
- Protein from seafood: Shrimp and crab help make the salad more substantial than a plain pasta salad.
Using Greek yogurt in the dressing can add another modest protein boost.
- Easy-to-find ingredients: Pasta, seafood, crunchy vegetables, and simple dressing ingredients are straightforward to prepare.
Cooked, peeled shrimp makes assembly especially convenient.
- Great for making ahead: Chilling gives the dressing time to blend with the seafood and pasta.
Add a little extra yogurt dressing before serving if the pasta absorbs too much moisture.
- Flexible and customizable: You can adjust the seafood mixture, vegetables, herbs, and dressing to your taste.
You can also use more seafood and less pasta for a lower-carbohydrate variation.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

1. Overcooking the pasta: Pasta that becomes too soft may turn mushy after chilling and mixing with dressing. Cook it until just al dente and rinse briefly with cool water if

needed to stop the cooking.

2. Using warm ingredients: Warm pasta can thin the dressing and affect the texture of the seafood. Cool the pasta completely before combining it with the chilled ingredients.
3. Adding too much dressing at once: Pasta absorbs moisture as it sits, but too much dressing can make the salad heavy. Start with most of the dressing and add more as needed after chilling.
4. Leaving seafood unrefrigerated: Seafood is perishable and should not sit at room temperature for extended periods. Keep the salad chilled and return it to the refrigerator promptly after serving.

Required Equipment

- Large pot — Provides enough room to cook the pasta evenly.
- Colander — Drains pasta and helps cool it quickly.
- Large mixing bowl — Gives enough space to combine the ingredients without crushing the seafood.
- Small bowl — Makes it easy to whisk the creamy dressing until smooth.
- Whisk or fork — Blends the yogurt, mayonnaise, lemon juice, and seasonings.
- Chef's knife and cutting board — Make chopping the vegetables quick and consistent.
- Measuring cups and spoons — Help keep the dressing and portions consistent.
- Airtight food-storage container — Keeps the salad covered and refrigerated between servings.

Storage Instructions

Refrigerator: Transfer the salad to a clean, airtight container and refrigerate promptly at 40°F (4°C) or below. For best quality and food safety, eat within 1–2 days, particularly when made with cooked seafood.

Freezer: Freezing is not recommended because mayonnaise-based dressing can separate and the pasta and vegetables may become soft after thawing.

Serving safety: Do not leave seafood salad at room temperature for more than two hours, or more than one hour when temperatures exceed 90°F (32°C). Serve it in a chilled bowl over ice if it will be on a buffet.

Meal-prep tip: Store the dressing separately and combine it with the cold pasta, vegetables, and seafood closer to serving time for the freshest texture.

Recipe Details

- Preparation Time: 20 minutes
- Cooking Time: 10 minutes
- Chilling Time: 30 minutes
- Total Time: Approximately 1 hour
- Servings: 6
- Best Season for This Recipe: All-season, especially spring and summer
- Total Calories (Per Serving): Approximately 330 calories

Nutrition and timing are estimates. Actual values depend on the seafood, pasta, dressing brands, and portion sizes.

Short 3-Line Description

Creamy Seafood and Pasta Salad combines tender pasta, shrimp, crab, crunchy vegetables, and a tangy, creamy dressing.

Greek yogurt adds a protein boost while lemon and herbs keep the flavor fresh and balanced. Serve it chilled for an easy lunch, picnic dish, or make-ahead family meal.

□ Ingredients

For the Salad

- 8 ounces (225 g) dry rotini or elbow pasta — Holds the dressing well; choose whole-wheat pasta for more fiber if desired.
- 8 ounces (225 g) cooked shrimp, peeled and deveined — Adds lean protein; thaw frozen cooked shrimp safely in the refrigerator.
- 8 ounces (225 g) imitation crab meat, chopped — Adds a mild, slightly sweet seafood flavor; check the label because imitation crab commonly contains fish and wheat.
- 1/2 cup celery, finely diced — Adds refreshing crunch.
- 1/2 cup red bell pepper, diced — Adds color and sweetness.
- 1/4 cup red onion, finely diced — Gives the salad a mild sharpness.
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped — Adds freshness and color.

For the Creamy Dressing

- 1/3 cup mayonnaise — Provides classic creamy richness.

- 1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt — Adds tanginess and extra protein.
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice — Brightens the seafood flavor.
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard — Adds a gentle savory tang.
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder — Gives the dressing extra depth.
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper — Adds mild warmth.
- 1/4 teaspoon salt, or to taste — Adjust depending on the seafood's salt content.
- 1-2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill, optional — Pairs well with shrimp and crab.

Directions

1. Boil the pasta — 8-10 minutes.
Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat. Add the pasta and cook according to the package directions until just al dente. The pasta should be tender but still hold its shape.
2. Drain and cool the pasta — 5 minutes.
Drain the pasta in a colander. Rinse briefly with cool water to stop cooking, then drain thoroughly so excess water does not dilute the dressing. Let it cool completely.
3. Prepare the seafood and vegetables — 5-7 minutes.
If using frozen cooked shrimp, thaw it in the refrigerator and drain well. Chop the shrimp if large, cut the imitation crab into bite-sized pieces, and dice the celery, bell pepper, and onion.
4. Mix the creamy dressing — 2 minutes.
In a small bowl, whisk together the mayonnaise, Greek yogurt, lemon juice, Dijon mustard, garlic powder, black pepper, salt, and dill if using. The dressing should be smooth, creamy, and lightly tangy.
5. Combine the salad — 3 minutes.
Place the cooled pasta, shrimp, imitation crab, celery, bell pepper, onion, and parsley in a large bowl. Add most of the dressing and fold gently until the ingredients are evenly coated.
6. Taste and adjust — 1 minute.
Taste a small spoonful and adjust the lemon juice, pepper, or salt. If the salad seems dry, add the remaining dressing a little at a time.
7. Chill — 30 minutes.
Cover the bowl and refrigerate at 40°F (4°C) or below. Chilling helps the flavors blend and gives the dressing time to coat the pasta.
8. Serve cold.
Stir gently before serving. If the pasta has absorbed some dressing, mix in a spoonful of Greek yogurt or a small amount of reserved dressing. Keep the salad chilled until ready

to eat.

High-protein cooking tip: Use a generous portion of shrimp and choose Greek yogurt for part of the dressing. For an even higher-protein, lower-carb variation, reduce the pasta and increase the shrimp and crunchy vegetables.

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving – Approximate)

Estimated for 1 of 6 servings using regular pasta, cooked shrimp, imitation crab, mayonnaise, and Greek yogurt.

- Calories: 330 kcal
- Total Fat: 10 g
- Cholesterol: 115 mg
- Sodium: 650 mg
- Potassium: 300 mg
- Total Carbohydrates: 36 g
- Fiber: 2 g
- Net Carbs: 34 g
- Sugars: 4 g
- Protein: 24 g
- Calcium: 90 mg

Net carbs are estimated by subtracting fiber from total carbohydrates. These figures are approximate and can vary substantially by seafood type, imitation crab brand, pasta, and dressing. Check ingredient labels for more accurate values.

Notes

- Seafood choice: Cooked shrimp and imitation crab are convenient, but you can use cooked real crab if available. Nutrition and sodium will change.
- Food safety: Keep the salad refrigerated and avoid leaving it out for extended periods. Do not use seafood that has been stored or thawed unsafely.
- Allergy notes: Shellfish is a major allergen, and imitation crab commonly contains fish and wheat. Mayonnaise often contains egg, and Greek yogurt contains dairy. Check labels carefully.
- Flavor boosts: Add lemon zest, fresh dill, a little paprika, or extra black pepper for more flavor.

- Lower-carb adaptation: Replace some or all of the pasta with chopped cucumber, celery, or a suitable low-carb pasta alternative.
- Extra protein: Increase the shrimp and use plain Greek yogurt in the dressing, keeping in mind that changing quantities changes the nutrition.
- Serving idea: Serve alongside leafy greens or sliced tomatoes for a fresh, balanced plate.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can I make creamy seafood pasta salad ahead of time?

Yes, prepare it a few hours ahead, cover it, and refrigerate it until serving.

2. What seafood works best in this salad?

Cooked shrimp and crab are classic options, but cooked lobster or flaked cooked fish can also work.

3. How long does creamy seafood pasta salad last in the refrigerator?

For best quality and food safety, eat it within 1–2 days when refrigerated promptly at 40°F (4°C) or below.

4. Can I make this salad higher in protein?

Yes, increase the shrimp or crab and use plain Greek yogurt for part of the mayonnaise-based dressing.

5. Is creamy seafood pasta salad low-carb or keto-friendly?

The standard version is relatively high in carbohydrates because of the pasta, but you can reduce the carbs by using less pasta or a suitable low-carb alternative.

6. Can I freeze creamy seafood pasta salad?

Freezing is not recommended because the creamy dressing may separate and the pasta and vegetables may become soft after thawing.