



If it's spring, it must be time for a **herby salmon salad**

By Katie Workman

Nothing speaks to me of spring like a salmon salad. It's light and pretty and herby, and when you add pasta it becomes a real meal. It's also quite portable, so you'll want to think of this when you're envisioning lunch at your desk the next day, or when you're invited to a potluck event. And talk about easy to make. Poach the salmon. Boil the pasta. Puree dressing. Dump everything together and you're good.

I speed chill the salmon by popping it in the freezer for a few minutes. But if you have more time, you certainly could poach the salmon the night before

and refrigerate it until ready. Likewise, the pasta also could be cooled briefly in the freezer, spread in an even layer on a rimmed baking sheet (or similarly prepped the day before).

Some people really, really love cilantro, and some people really, really hate it. It's actually a genetic thing. For some people, it tastes soapy or otherwise unpleasant. So this recipe - with its creamy cilantro dressing - clearly is for the lovers, and not the dish to make if you're not sure about your audience. I love it (obviously, I guess), and I love this dressing. But if you'd rather lose the cilantro, feel free to substitute fresh basil.

PASTA SALAD WITH SALMON AND CREAMY CILANTRO DRESSING



Ingredients

Start to finish: 30 minutes

Servings: 6

2-pound salmon fillet, bones removed

Salt

1 pound cavatelli or elbow pasta

For the cilantro sauce

1 cup fresh cilantro leaves, plus extra to garnish

1/4 cup minced shallots

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1/2 cup mayonnaise

1/4 cup plain Greek yogurt (or another 1/4 cup mayonnaise)

2 tablespoons heavy cream

Pinch cayenne pepper

Ground black pepper

Preparation

Set the salmon in a large saute pan. If needed, cut the salmon into 2 pieces. Add enough cold water to just cover. Season with 2 teaspoons salt, then bring to a boil. Immediately turn off the heat, cover the pot and let the salmon sit for 10 minutes. After 10 minutes, transfer the salmon to a plate and set in the freezer to cool. Meanwhile, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the pasta and cook according to package directions, then drain. Rinse under cold water to cool. Set aside to drain.

Meanwhile, in a food processor or blender combine the cilantro, shallots, Dijon, mayonnaise, yogurt, cream and cayenne. Puree until smooth, then season with salt and pepper. When the salmon is chilled, remove the skin, if necessary, and break the flesh into bite-sized chunks. In a large bowl, combine the pasta, cilantro sauce and salmon, then toss gently to combine. Garnish with additional cilantro leaves.