

Mediterranean Whole Wheat Orzo Salad

Catherine Brown, Plant-based Chef & Culinary Nutritionist at [A Seat at My Table](#)



Right there in the aisle of the supermarket I let out a spontaneous, "Yessss!" snatched up a container and broke into my happy dance. Fortunately, my teenage son wasn't with me to be mortified. Whole wheat orzo, guys... can you believe it?? Let me repeat that. WHOLE wheat orzo!! - not the stripped down processed version. Not familiar with orzo? Orzo is a rice-shaped wheat pasta that is fabulous in soups and salads.

My first experience cooking with orzo was nearly twenty years ago when I was working my way through Diana Shaw's, *The Essential Vegetarian*. Shaw included a superb spinach orzo salad that was emerald green from the fresh spinach puree, and thanks to the inclusion of a hefty dose of lemon juice, it kept its brilliant color for next-day left-overs.

Today, I no longer eat refined pasta, so I couldn't help thinking wistfully of that salad each time I saw orzo in the supermarket. I've tried making the salad with other shapes and grains... *but you always remember your first*. You can imagine my excitement when I spotted the whole wheat orzo.... Finally! The whole wheat version ~ and I'm shakin' it like a maraca at a street fair!

This salad is nothing like the one Diana Shaw created, but it is simply fantastic. I had some extra Mediterranean Marinated Tofu (see [Marinated Tofu Two-Ways](#)) that I needed to use. I chose a few other ingredients that I had on hand and voila! Dinner pulled together in no time.

Total Time: 20 minutes (excluding marinating tofu)

Prep Time: 10-15 minutes Cook Time: 8-10 minutes (according to pasta directions)

For four servings, you will need:

- 1/2 pkg of whole wheat orzo (~ 1 cup dry)
- 1 can garbanzo or cannellini beans
- 2 cups grape or cherry tomatoes, sliced in half
- 2 cups cucumber, diced small
- ½ cup Kalamata olives, roughly chopped
- 2 cups grilled eggplant, diced
- ½ cup fresh basil, roughly chopped or 1 tsp dried, reserve a few whole leaves for garnish
- 1 Tbsp fresh lemon thyme (or reg. thyme) or ½ tsp dried
- 1 Tbsp fresh Greek oregano, leaves only or ½ tsp dried
- ½ order [Mediterranean Marinated Tofu](#), including the marinade (optional, see note below)
- 2 Tbsp toasted pine nuts (optional)

The Process:

1. If using [Mediterranean Marinated Tofu](#), prepare 8-24 hours in advance or see note below.
2. Prepare the orzo according to the package directions. Drain and set aside to cool.
3. Add chopped vegetables, drained and rinsed beans and herbs to the cooled orzo.
4. Add the cubes of marinated tofu along with ~ ½ cup of the marinade.
5. Gently toss, taste and adjust seasoning if needed.
6. Arrange on a serving platter or individual plates. Garnish with fresh basil and toasted pine nuts. Enjoy!

NOTE: If you have not prepared the marinated tofu ahead of time, you can use half a block of extra firm tofu, pressing as much extra liquid as possible and cut into small cubes. Use the marinade ingredients as the dressing for this dish. The tofu tastes best when it has time to soak up all these lovely flavors.

Nutrition Facts	
Servings: 4	
Amount per serving	
Calories	600
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 17.5g	22%
Saturated Fat 1.8g	9%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 455mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 84g	31%
Dietary Fiber 19.1g	68%
Total Sugars 10.8g	
Protein 31.1g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 340mg	26%
Iron 9mg	49%
Potassium 1004mg	21%
<small>*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a food serving contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calorie a day is used for general nutrition advice.</small>	
Recipe analyzed by verywell	

Nutritional information is for 2 cups of orzo salad prepared with marinated firm tofu.

This salad is highly adaptable and can be made with just about ANY grilled or roasted vegetables and ANY whole grain!

If you give this recipe a go, let me know how you liked it! Take a photo and tag me #chefcatherinebrown. I love seeing what you make!

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