

LEMON ORZO PASTA SALAD

INGREDIENTS

- 500 g bacon strips
- 680 g butternut squash cubes
- 113 g baby spinach
- 1 tsp chili flakes
- 2 garlic cloves
- ½ cup parmesan cheese - shredded
- 340 g orzo pasta
- 2 lemons
- 1 tsp sugar
- 6 tbsp olive oil - divided
- salt & pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 425° F
- Wash, dry and cube squash
- In a large pot add water, orzo and 2 tsp salt
- Cover and bring to a boil over high heat until tender, 9-10 minutes.
- Meanwhile, on a baking sheet, toss the squash with chili flakes and oil. Season with salt & pepper.
- Roast in the centre of the oven, stirring halfway through cooking, until golden & tender, 20-22 minutes.
- Meanwhile, cut the bacon into ¼ inch pieces. Heat a large, non-stick pan over medium-high heat. Add 2 tbsp oil. Cook bacon, stirring occasionally, until crisp, 7-8 min.
- Remove pan from heat. Using a slotted spoon, transfer bacon to a small bowl. Set aside.
- Mince or grate garlic, zest then juice 1 lemon, then cut remaining lemon into wedges.
- In a large bowl, vigorously whisk together the lemon zest, lemon juice, garlic, 1 tsp sugar and 4 tbsp oil. Set aside.
- When orzo is tender, add spinach into the same pot. Stir together until the spinach wilts, 1 min. Drain and rinse orzo and spinach under cold running water. Add orzo, spinach, squash and half the bacon into the large bowl with the dressing. Toss together, then season with salt and pepper.
- Divide salad between bowls. Top with remaining bacon and sprinkle with cheese. Squeeze lemon wedge over all if desired.

