

Note: *This dish is so flexible, you can substitute whatever you are craving or have on hand! You also have the freedom to choose whichever amounts you like! (I typically prefer a generous amount of olives and parsley.)*

- **Roasted red peppers**
- **Artichoke hearts**
- **Olives**
- **Celery (for crunch!)**
- **Oregano (fresh or dried) and parsley**
- **Salt and pepper** to taste
- *Olive oil and lemon juice to taste (or if feeling ambitious, could make an Italian vinaigrette)*

Note: *I suggest opting for either heavy cream or crème fraîche, for the butter and chicken stock already add so much richness.*

Big Al's Italian pasta salad

Note: *For a lighter version (though my father would have outright laughed at the thought) swap the pasta for beans – chickpeas or cannellini are a good match with classic Italian ingredients - or, swap charcuterie for a meatless option.*

1. Gather ingredients, bring salted water to a boil (as Samin Nosrat, author of Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat once said - it should be as salty as your memory of the ocean). While waiting for the water to boil chop meats, cheeses, roasted red peppers, artichoke hearts, olives, celery, other vegetables and herbs and mix.

2. Once water is at a roaring boil, drop in pasta, stir once and cook for half the allocated package time. Taste, and keep tasting every minute or so until the pasta is a tiny bit more al dente than your ideal – the pasta will continue to cook in the moments between draining and running cold water over, which is the next step. Take a good tasting olive oil and drizzle enough over top to just coat the pasta - this keeps it from sticking together and adds flavor right out of the gate.

3. Add pasta to your bowl of chopped goodness, drizzle olive oil and lemon juice (or dressing) and taste for seasoning. I like a bit of pepper and a ton of fresh parsley. Note: If using a salty meat, such as porchetta, you won't need as much salt.

SOURCE: [THESAVERY.SUBSTACK.COM](https://thesavory.substack.com)