

BLT Pasta

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Recipe from [Cooking Light](#), adapted with permission from [Back Pocket Pasta: Inspired Dinners to Cook on the Fly](#), by Colu Henry



INGREDIENTS:

- 1 tablespoon plus 3/8 tsp. kosher salt, divided
- 10 ounces uncooked mezze rigatoni or penne pasta
- 2 ounces slab bacon, cut into 1/2-inch dice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 pound red or yellow cherry tomatoes, halved (about 3 cups)
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, divided
- 5 ounces watercress, coarsely chopped
- 1 ounce pecorino Romano cheese, grated

DIRECTIONS:

Bring a large saucepan filled with water and 1 tablespoon salt to a boil. Add pasta and cook 10 minutes or until al dente. Drain in a colander over a bowl, reserving 1 cup pasta cooking liquid.

Place bacon and olive oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium-low; cook 8 minutes or until the bacon is crisp, stirring occasionally. Remove bacon from pan (do not wipe out pan).

Heat pan over medium. Add tomatoes, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper to drippings in pan; cook 5 minutes or until tomatoes are tender and almost melt, scraping pan to loosen browned bits. Stir in half of the cooked bacon.

Increase heat to medium-high. Add pasta to pan; toss to coat. Add 1/2 cup reserved pasta cooking liquid and watercress, stirring until watercress wilts. Add 1/4 to 1/2 cup reserved pasta cooking liquid to pan as needed to loosen sauce.

Divide pasta mixture among 4 shallow bowls; sprinkle evenly with remaining 1/8 teaspoon salt and remaining 1/4 teaspoon pepper.

Top servings evenly with remaining half of bacon and cheese.