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One of the best ways to make a house into a home is to invite some friends over for a meal. If you try this recipe, let me know how it turns out for you. And if you have a favorite recipe of your own, send it my way.

Salade Nicoise

This is my favorite kind of recipe: it has a fancy name and plenty of flavor, but it's easy to prepare and makes great left-overs. So when you prepare it for your guests, they will be impressed with your sense of culinary adventure and pleased with the dish you prepare for them, and you will be able to enjoy it all again the next day by just popping the remainders in the microwave. The salad gets its name from the French coastal city of Nice, and the combination of ingredients and flavors will help you feel like you are dining on the Mediterranean shore, and not in the desert Southwest!

12 oz egg noodles	2 tsp Dijon mustard
1 cup frozen green beans	1/2 tsp dried thyme
1 1/4 lbs tuna steak	1/2 cup sun-dried tomatoes in oil sliced
Salt & pepper to taste	1/2 cup pitted Nicoise olives, drained & halved
1/2 cup chicken or vegetable broth	2 Tbs chopped fresh parsley
2 Tbs olive oil	1/4 cup grated Romano cheese
2 Tbs lemon juice	

1. Cook egg noodles according to package directions. Add the green beans for the last 30 seconds of cooking time. Drain and transfer to a large serving bowl.
2. Pre-heat the broiler. Season both sides of the tuna steaks with salt & pepper. Place on a foil-lined baking sheet and broil until fork-tender, about 5 minutes per side.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together the broth, olive oil, lemon juice, mustard, thyme, and about 1/2 teaspoon each of salt & pepper. Add this mix to the noodles & toss to combine.
4. Using a fork, pull apart the cooked tuna into 1-inch chunks and fold into the pasta along with the tomatoes, olives, and parsley. Sprinkle the grated Romano over the top just before serving.

The recipe, which once again comes from the Arizona Republic's food section, makes 4 servings. It holds up fine on its own, but it also goes nicely with a side of French bread with a little dipping oil and a crisp bottle of white wine.

If you want to make preparation even easier when company comes over, you can cook the noodles & tuna up to 3 days in advance. Store them in separate sealed containers, and then slice & toss the remaining ingredients when you are ready to eat. Toss it all in the microwave for a few minutes, top it with the cheese, and you are all set to go.



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