Ensalada de Coditos (Puerto Rican Macaroni Salad)

A creamy, nostalgic party favorite that tastes like a warm island hug chilled in the fridge.

Country, Puerto Rico
(ample) Servings: 8-10
Active Prep and cook time: 25-35 min / Inactive prep time 1-12 hours

Ingredients (serves 8–10)
1 lb elbow macaroni
3 eggs, hard-boiled
1 C mayonnaise
2 tbsp white vinegar
1 C ham, diced (smoked ham steak or ham steak preferred)
½ C red bell pepper, diced
½ C red onion, diced (or scallions, sliced)
½ C pimento-stuffed green olives, sliced
2–3 tbsp sweet corn, drained (optional)
1 tsp yellow mustard
1–2 tsp chicken bouillon granules (optional, for pasta water)
Salt and black pepper to taste
Fresh parsley, chopped for garnish

Method
Bring a large pot of water to a boil; add chicken bouillon granules if using. Add macaroni and cook until al dente. During the last 10–12 minutes of the pasta cook, add whole eggs to the same pot and boil until hard-boiled. Drain pasta and rinse under cold water to stop cooking.
Peel and chop the hard-boiled eggs.
In a large bowl whisk mayonnaise, white vinegar, and yellow mustard until smooth; season with salt and black pepper.
Add cooled pasta, chopped eggs, ham, red bell pepper, red onion, olives, and sweet corn; fold gently until everything is evenly coated.
Chill at least 1 hour; best if refrigerated overnight so flavors meld. Garnish with chopped parsley before serving.

Notes: If you want a more traditional version, use smoked ham steak or diced Spam with a splash of vinegar for more tang. Make ahead to allow the flavors to meld. If you must make it the same day, give it at least one hour to chill. Refrigerates well and will last about 3-4 days, but will soften over time so dress lightly if planning to store longer.