

Panzanella Salad

Authentic Italian Panzanella salad with ripe tomatoes, crusty bread, and fresh herbs. This Tuscan bread salad is perfect for summer entertaining.

35 min

PREP

10 min

COOK

45 min

TOTAL

4

SERVINGS

Easy

DIFFICULTY

Ingredients

- 3 bread
- 2 oz tomato
- 6 tbsp olive oil
- 1 red onion
- 2 clove garlic
- 4 cucumber
- 1 cup basil
- 1 cup mozzarella cheese
- 1 cup ricotta cheese
- 4 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper

Instructions

1 Prepare the bread

Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Cut 3 pieces of day-old bread into 1-inch cubes and toss with 2 oz olive oil on a baking sheet. Toast for 8-10 minutes until golden brown and crispy on the outside but still slightly soft inside.

2 Prepare the tomatoes

Cut 4 large tomatoes into bite-sized chunks and place in a large mixing bowl. Sprinkle with 1 tsp salt and let sit for 15 minutes to release their juices.

- 3 Slice 1 red onion paper-thin and soak in cold water for 10 minutes to mellow the flavor. Drain thoroughly and pat completely dry with paper towels.
- 4 Slice 2 cucumbers into half-moon shapes about ¼-inch thick. Cut 1 cup fresh mozzarella and 1 cup ricotta into bite-sized chunks.
- 5 Mince 2 cloves garlic very finely. Tear 1 cup fresh basil leaves into smaller pieces by hand.
- 6 **Make the dressing**

Whisk together 4 tbsp red wine vinegar, minced garlic, 1 tsp salt, and 1 tsp black pepper in a small bowl until the salt completely dissolves.
- 7 **Assemble the salad**

Add toasted bread cubes, drained onions, cucumbers, mozzarella, ricotta, and torn basil to the bowl with the salted tomatoes and their accumulated juices.
- 8 Pour the vinegar dressing and remaining 6 tbsp olive oil over the salad. Toss gently with your hands or large spoons until everything is evenly coated and the bread begins to absorb the juices.
- 9 Let the salad stand at room temperature for 30 minutes to allow the bread to soften and the flavors to meld before serving.

Tips

Salt your tomatoes 15 minutes before assembling to draw out their natural juices, which become part of the dressing.

Soak thinly sliced red onions in cold water for 10 minutes to reduce their bite and make them more mellow.

Toast your bread cubes until golden brown but not completely crispy – they should still have some give to absorb the dressing.

Let the assembled salad rest at room temperature for 30 minutes before serving to allow the bread to absorb the flavors.

Use the ripest tomatoes you can find – their juice is what makes the bread tender and flavorful.

Drizzle extra olive oil and vinegar just before serving to refresh the flavors and add brightness.

Tear the bread by hand rather than cutting it for more rustic, irregular pieces that hold dressing better.

Add delicate herbs like basil at the very end to prevent them from wilting and turning dark.