

Panzanella Salad (Italian Bread Salad)

From the kitchen of Donna Wojdula

Ingredients:

Garlic Dressing:

1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon red wine vinegar
1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon lemon juice
2 tablespoons strained capers
6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon chopped garlic

Salad:

6 to 7 medium Roma tomatoes (2 ½ cups diced)
1 small red onion, peeled, diced and rinsed (1/2 cup)
1 cucumber, peeled, seeded and diced (1 cup)
1/4 cup coarsely chopped tarragon leaves (not tightly packed)
1 cup torn or coarsely cut basil leaves (not tightly packed)
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
2 1/2 cups medium diced day-old good quality artisan bread
1/2 cup sliced green and/or black olives, preferably brine-cured
1/2 cup grated ricotta salata (see note)

Note: Ricotta salata is a salted ricotta cheese from Sicily. It's available at specialty food stores

Instructions:

1. Whisk together dressing ingredients and set aside.
2. In large bowl, mix tomatoes, onion, cucumber, tarragon and basil and season lightly to taste with salt and pepper.
3. Add the bread, olives, dressing and cheese and mix.
4. Cover and let sit 10 minutes.
5. Toss well and refrigerate half an hour. Remove and toss again.
6. Adjust seasoning and serve.

Cook's comment:

If you can't find ricotta salata, don't use regular ricotta as it becomes lost in the salad; use some other cheese.