Posted on 23 June 2015

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Panzanella (Tuscan Bread and Tomato salad)



Ingredients

3 - 4 thick slices of stale Tuscan bread or white country bread (about 200 grams)
1 very crunchy cucumber (I like to leave few strips of the skin on)
1 medium red onion
2 - 3 ripe plum tomatoes
large handful of basil leaves
extra virgin olive oil
white wine vinegar
salt and pepper to taste
(Serves 2 to 3)

Preparation

1. Pass the slices of bread under running water and let sit in a bowl to soften.
2. Slice the red onion very thinly, place in a bowl, sprinkle with some of the white wine vinegar and let sit for about 15 to 20 minutes to take the pungent flavor off.
3. Thinly slice the cucumber, dice the tomatoes preserving all their juice, and place in a large bowl.
4. When the bread has softened a bit and is springy to the touch, crumble it with your hands or dice with a knife (removing the crust if necessary) and add it to the bowl with tomatoes and cucumber.
5. If the bread is still too hard sprinkle some more water or vinegar (remember that we are going to add oil and vinegar to the whole dish which the bread will absorb too)
6. if on the contrary you have added too much water, simply squeeze the bread with your fingers before adding to the bowl.
7. When the onions have lost some of their strong flavor, drain and add to the bowl. Season with a pinch of salt, some freshly ground black pepper, a generous dose of olive oil, a splash of white wine vinegar and toss until well combined.
8. Set aside for about one hour before serving, then add the basil leaves and serve.

Cooks Note

(Source)