

PANZANELLA SALAD



From the Timken's Italian Gallery, we bring you Giovanni Antonio Boltraffio's *Portrait of a Youth Holding an Arrow*, the inspiration for a variation of an Italian summer staple, Panzanella Salad. The high contrast of red and green complementary colors used by Boltraffio are deliciously replicated by pairing tomatoes, cucumbers and basil in this Panzanella Salad.

RECIPE

Serves 4-6

INGREDIENTS

4 large tomatoes, cut into bite-size pieces
2 teaspoons kosher salt, plus more to taste
6 to 8 thick slices ciabatta or rustic sourdough bread, cut into 1 1/2 -inch cubes
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more as needed
1 small shallot, minced
2 medium cloves garlic, minced
1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard
3 Tbs. balsamic or red wine vinegar, plus more as needed
1/2 hothouse cucumber, unpeeled and sliced 1/2 inch thick
1/2 cup fresh basil leaves, thinly sliced
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Place tomatoes in a colander set over a bowl and season with 2 teaspoons salt. Toss to coat. Set aside at room temperature to drain, tossing occasionally. Drain for 15 minutes.

Toss bread cubes with 2 tablespoons olive oil. Transfer to a baking sheet and bake until crisp and golden, approximately 10-15 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool.

Remove colander with tomatoes from bowl with tomato juice and set aside. Add shallot, garlic, mustard, and vinegar to the bowl with tomato juice. Whisking constantly, drizzle in the remaining olive oil. Season dressing to taste with salt and pepper.

In a large bowl, mix the tomatoes, cucumbers and basil. Add the bread cubes and toss with the vinaigrette. Season liberally with salt and pepper. Cover the salad and refrigerate for an hour for flavors to blend.

Just before serving, toss the salad and adjust the seasonings with salt and pepper. If the bread seems dry, add a little oil or vinegar. Garnish with the basil sprigs and serve.