

Tuscan Bread Salad

I've been intrigued by an Italian bread salad recipe such as this from Giorgio Locatelli for some time. It's another idea with many variations and apparently no definitive recipe. I finally got around to trying this one and it was quite successful.

The flavours really do improve overnight. However, because of the "maturing", the trick lies in getting the correct balance between the amount of bread and the amount of liquid. We want soft, tasty bread but definitely not soggy bread. I suggest adding the dressing gradually, adding more as the salad matures if the bread needs to be a little softer.

Planning

serves:	4
prep time:	overnight
cooking time:	10-30 mins

Ingredients

1 small loaf country style bread about 2-3 days old
1 small cucumber, roughly chopped
1 large red onion, roughly chopped
3 very ripe tomatoes, roughly chopped
5 tbs olive oil
3 tbs red wine vinegar
2 tbs capers. drained
1-2 tbs sugar, to taste
12 fresh basil leaves, roughly crushed
salt & pepper

Method

Preheat the oven to 170°C/Gas 3. Cut the bread into large cubes and spread it out in a large roasting tin. Toast it in the oven until golden (about 20 minutes). Leave to cool.

In a bowl, mix the cucumber, onion, tomatoes and toasted bread cubes. Season with salt and pepper.

Whisk together the olive oil, vinegar, capers, sugar, some salt and pepper, and add this to the bowl with the basil. Give it a good stir. Cover it and leave it in the fridge overnight for the flavours to mellow. The bread should feel moist but not soggy.

Serve it as a starter or as a salad accompaniment to grilled or roasted meat.