

Panzanella - Italian Bread Salad

First rule – use good bread! Use a nice rustic Italian bread or good baguette and don't use anything else.

Ingredients

1 large garlic clove 1/2 cup plus 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

6 cups of crusty baguette, cut into 1-inch cubes 3/4 lb cherry tomatoes, halved (or grape tomatoes) 1 teaspoon salt 1/2 teaspoon black pepper 1 lb green beans, trimmed and cut in half

3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar 3 tablespoons capers (packed in brine), rinsed, drained, and chopped (skip them if you don't have them 1/2 teaspoon sugar (or honey!) 1 (19-oz) can cannellini beans or chickpeas, rinsed and drained 3/4 cup chopped fresh basil

Preheat oven to 425

1. Make garlic oil. Mince and mash garlic, add a pinch of salt and work into a paste. (Use the flat of a heavy knife, working into a plastic cutting board) Add 1/2 c. olive oil (slow stream) whisk until combined well.
2. Cook croutons. Put the bread cubes in a lg bowl, drizzle with 3 tablespoons garlic oil, toss, divide between 2 large shallow baking pans (arrange cubes in 1 layer). Toast in oven, stirring once or twice, until golden, 10 to 12 minutes. (Leave oven on.)
3. Coat and prep the veggies.
 - Toss tomatoes with 1 Tbls. oil olive oil (not your garlic oil), 1/4 tsp. salt, and 1/8 tspn. pepper in a bowl, arrange in 1 layer on a large shallow baking pan.
 - Toss green beans in same bowl with 2 Tbls. garlic oil, 1/4 tspn. salt, and 1/8 tspn. pepper, then arrange in 1 layer in *another* large shallow baking pan.
1. Roast vegetables. Shake pans once or twice, cook until tomatoes are very tender but not falling apart and beans are just tender and browned in spots, 12 to 16 minutes. Cool.
2. While vegetables roast, add vinegar to remaining garlic oil along with capers, sugar, remaining 1/2 tspn salt, and 1/4 tspn pepper and whisk to combine well.
3. Combine beans, tomatoes (along with any pan juices), croutons, and basil in a large bowl, drizzle with dressing and stir to combine well. Let stand 10 to 15 minutes at room temperature to allow flavors to develop, stir.

When something's this good you can keep the rest of the meal simple – a grilled meat (goes with anything) served along side and a plain green salad as a first course or accompaniment.

This recipe can be modified – add roasted red peppers, add mozzarella... Once you've had it, it'll become part of your recipe repertoire!