

Greek Bread Salad

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(Andrew's notes)

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:

To add a spicy pop to our Greek Bread Salad (Panzanella), we replaced some of the vinegar with brine from jarred pepperoncini and a spoonful of mustard. To flavor the pita and head off a soggy situation, we tossed the torn pieces with olive oil, garlic, and oregano and toasted them in the oven. We soon discovered that the salad became more flavorful as it sat. Tasters preferred a 30-minute marinade before serving; any longer and the vegetables became mushy.

SERVES 4 TO 6

INGREDIENTS

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped jarred pepperoncini, plus $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons pepperoncini brine
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano (*fresh if possible*)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 (16-ounce) can chickpeas drained and rinsed
- 1 cucumber, peeled, halved lengthwise, seeded, and sliced thin
- 1 cup crumbled feta cheese
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup pitted kalamata olives, halved
- $\frac{1}{2}$ small red onion, halved and sliced thin
- 2 (10-inch) pita breads, torn into 1-inch pieces (*or a french stick/baguette*)
- 1 garlic clove, minced (*added to dressing*)
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup chopped fresh parsley
- Salt and pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Adjust oven rack to upper-middle position and heat oven to 400 degrees. Combine pepperoncini brine, vinegar, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon oregano, and mustard in medium bowl. Slowly whisk 5 tablespoons oil into vinegar mixture. Add tomatoes, chickpeas, cucumber, feta, olives, onion, and pepperoncini and toss to combine. Let sit 30 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, toss pita, remaining oil, garlic, and remaining oregano in medium bowl. Bake pita on rimmed baking sheet until golden brown, about 10 minutes, stirring halfway through baking. Stir toasted pita and parsley into salad. Let stand 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Serve.

MAKE AHEAD Toasted pita can be stored at room temperature in airtight container for up to 2 days.