

RV GODDESS: Panzanella

Italian Tomato and Bread Salad. A great recipe for those hot summer days when you have perfect tomatoes! Panzanella is also a great way to use day-old bread. This is the basic recipe - use your imagination and toss in additional ingredients - fresh buffalo milk mozzarella cheese, onion, and cucumbers are also popular additions. Use a good quality French bread or a substantial loaf, such as ciabatta for this salad - crusts and all. You will need roughly equal amounts of bread and tomatoes. In a pinch, simply use your favorite bottled Italian dressing - but don't even think about using dried basil in this salad.

SALAD:

Bread, cut into large cubes, about two cups

2 large, ripe and firm, tomatoes (such as beefsteak, or 4 Roma tomatoes)

Handful fresh basil leaves, torn or roughly chopped

DRESSING:

1 clove garlic, minced (or more if you are crazy for garlic)

¼ cup good quality olive oil

2 teaspoons white wine vinegar

½ teaspoon kosher salt

black pepper to taste

Place the bread cubes, chopped tomatoes and fresh basil in a salad bowl. Combine dressing ingredients and toss. Let salad rest about ten minutes before serving, so the bread can absorb the delicious dressing.

Serves 4 as a salad or appetizer course; two as a main or luncheon course.