

# RV GODDESS: Salad Nicoise

Salad Nicoise is a healthy main dish salad I make several times a year - usually when the temperatures climb. Salad Nicoise is a classic dish from the French Mediterranean, and typically consists of tuna, sliced potatoes, green beans, tomatoes, hard boiled eggs - plus other veggies - with a classic vinaigrette dressing.

Don't feel compelled to follow these instructions as to which vegetables to use in this salad. I'm not a fan of eggs, so they are rarely in my version. No one is going to care if you toss in a few slivers of bell pepper, radish, avocado or cucumber. Honestly, half the time I make this salad without lettuce. No, I did not forget the salt - between the tuna, anchovies, mustard, olives and capers, the salad should be salty enough for most palates.

For the dressing (makes about 1/2 cup):

1/3 cup best-quality extra virgin olive oil

2 teaspoons anchovy paste (optional)

2 Tablespoons finely minced shallot

1 Tablespoon white wine vinegar

1 Tablespoon fresh lemon juice

1 Tablespoon Dijon mustard (such as Maille Old Style)

About a tablespoon of fresh tarragon leaves, torn (or 1 teaspoon dried)

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

For the salad:

(Use these measurements only as a guideline.)

2-3 cups torn butter or romaine lettuce leaves

2 medium yellow or red potatoes, boiled until tender, chilled and sliced

20 green beans, trimmed, blanched 4-5 minutes, drained and chilled

6-ounce can solid white tuna in water, drained and chunked

Two medium Roma tomatoes, sliced (or use whole cherry/grape tomatoes)

1-2 hard-boiled eggs, chilled and quartered

12-15 whole Nicoise, black or Kalamata olives

1/4 cup slivered red onion (or green onion)

1 Tablespoon capers, rinsed, as optional garnish

Mix all dressing ingredients together in a small bowl (I make it in a one-cup Pyrex measuring cup). Whisk well and set aside. Line the bottom of a serving platter with a little torn lettuce, then place the remaining salad items decoratively over the lettuce in the order listed. Pour dressing over and serve.

Serves 4 for luncheon; 2 or 3 for dinner - with a baguette.