

## LAURA's Panzanella Salad

These past weeks while volunteering for Brookwood selling our harvest at the Roslindale farmers market, an unlikely love affair began. It started when customer after customer, admiring our display of cucumbers, asked which variety was better: Little Leaf or Hermione? Farmers Deana and Lindsey couldn't decide, so Deana began slicing them up and the taste test began. I personally, never liked cucumbers much, but felt I too should determine my preference. I tasted one, then the other, then one, then the other, and then repeated the process. My addiction began. The cucumbers from Brookwood, were so crisp, and refreshing, that I discovered I actually loved the vegetable. I even got to the point that I could be perfectly content having nothing else than raw sliced cucumbers with a sprinkle of salt, and hummus for dinner! (My favorite CSA member, Ramona Roux, age 1, shares my sentiment. ☺ ) This love affair with the cucumber made me reflect on what other dishes included my new "boyfriend." I then remembered Panzanella...the quintessential Tuscan summer salad. I first had it in Maremma, on the Tuscan coast, and I remember it being the perfect meal after a long day literally under the Tuscan sun. This dish is a prime example of Italians using local, seasonal, vegetables while utilizing what's "left over" so nothing will be wasted. Only the Italians can do this in the most delicious way! Panzanella can be made using endless combinations of seasonal vegetables of your liking. I off course, chose to try it with my favorite vegetables from Brookwood farm..featuring my new love, the cucumber. I think you will love it too! Try it for yourself! ☺

The following recipe serves 4 people

### INGREDIENTS

- 4 medium to large cucumbers (either Little Leaf or Hermione)
- 1 pint of Sungold cherry tomatoes
- ½ pint of Sakura cherry tomatoes
- 1 fennel bulb
- 3 spring onions
- ½ cup of organic extra virgin olive oil (I recommend Monini Fruttato)
- 1/4 cup of high quality balsamic vinegar (I recommend Elba brand from Modena)
- 15 Genoa basil leaves
- 2 teaspoons of pink Himalayan sea salt
- 1 teaspoon of black pepper
- 3 slices of day-old Italian bread (toasted bread will also work)
- 1 Czech black pepper

### DIRECTIONS

Cut the cucumbers lengthwise into quarters and then horizontally into ½ inch pieces

Halve the tomatoes  
Thinly slice the fennel  
Halve the spring onions end to end, and then slice them finely  
Dice the Czech pepper finely, removing the seeds  
Cut the bread into 1 inch cubes  
Put all of the ingredients to a bowl  
Add the oil, vinegar, salt, and pepper  
Cut the basil with a scissor into the bowl  
Mix the mixture together into the bread and vegetables are well coated and serve.

BUON APPETITO! ☺  
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