

Greek Country Salad ***salata a la horiatiki***

This salad is packed with juicy sun-drenched tomatoes, sweet red onion and crunchy cucumber (olives and feta are mandatory). Other ingredients depend on one's preference and availability of fresh pickings. I love choosing colourful heirloom tomatoes in New York and serve this salad as a starter or with grills and roasts.

1 kg (2¼lb) vine-ripe or heirloom tomatoes
1 cup sliced radishes
1 medium red onion, cut in half lengthways and sliced paper-thin
2 crisp young cucumbers, peeled and sliced thickly on the diagonal
½ cup roughly chopped flat-leaf parsley (*use leaves and tender stems*)
1 cup brined or oil-cured black olives
120g (4oz) feta cheese
1 tsp dried Greek oregano

For the dressing:

3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
1 tbsp red wine vinegar
½ tsp sea salt
a pinch freshly ground black pepper

Cut the tomatoes into quarters, then cut each quarter lengthways and drain in a colander.

Place the radishes, onion, cucumbers, parsley and olives into a large, wide salad bowl. Just before serving stir in the tomatoes.

Whisk the dressing ingredients together in a small bowl. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Pour over the salad and toss well.

Break the feta cheese into large chunks and scatter over the salad with the oregano. Serve with crusty bread to dunk in the dressing!

Twist on Tradition:

- Add to the salad: 1 iceberg lettuce, thinly sliced; ½ cup roughly chopped fresh dill; 10 whole caper berries; 6 bottled or canned anchovy fillets; 1 fennel bulb, trimmed and thinly sliced crossways.

Stella's Hint:

- Mixed colourful heirloom tomatoes make a wonderful touch and are usually found at selected greengrocers or markets. Small Persian or Lebanese cucumbers are best for this salad.