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panzanella recipe

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When I worked as a waitress at the River Cafe, this was one of the first recipes I learnt. Using bread in a salad may seem odd, and you might think it would be heavy, but this is one of the best summer tomato salads.

Serves 4 as a main course, 8 as a starter

- 1kg ripe tomatoes
- 2 thick slices of coarse white bread, such as Pugliese or ciabatta
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- salt and black pepper
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 generous tablespoon capers, roughly chopped
- 75g tin of anchovies, drained and roughly chopped
- 1 small red onion, very thinly sliced
- 12 black olives
- large bunch of basil (sweet and purple if you can find it), roughly chopped
- large bunch of flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped
- 2 mild fresh red chillies, thinly sliced (optional)

Skin the tomatoes. Put one large tomato aside, and deseed and roughly chop the rest. Place the chopped tomatoes in a sieve over a bowl to catch the juices.

Tear the slices of bread into small chunks and put them in a large bowl. Season the collected tomato juice with garlic, pepper, oil and vinegar, and pour this over the bread. Add the chopped tomatoes and then stir a little. If the bread still looks dry, add more oil.

Put a layer of the bread and tomato mix on a large plate and add some capers, anchovies, onions, olives, herbs, and, if you want them, chillies. Then add another layer of bread and tomatoes, then more capers, anchovies, olives, etc.

Leave the panzanella for at least an hour to let the different tastes soak into the bread before you eat. Add a few more leaves of fresh basil and one freshly chopped tomato just before serving.

This recipe features on p274 of Sarah Raven's [Garden Cookbook](#).



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