

## Panzanella (Bread Salad) Riverwalk Restaurant

*Throughout Central Italy – from Florence down to Rome – the most satisfying of salads utilizes the ingredients of the resourceful impoverished – bread and water. Stale bread is moistened but not drenched with cold water. The other ingredients are added and tossed with oil and vinegar. The bread, saturated with the salad's condiments and juices, dissolves to a grainy consistency like loose polenta. Given the right bread (not supermarket white), a gutsy country loaf such as that of Tuscany or Abruzzi, there is no change that one can bring to the traditional version to improve it. If you rely on standard commercial bread, choose one that requires additional baking to dry it.*

½ clove garlic, peeled  
2 or 3 flat anchovies, rinsed  
1 T capers, soaked and rinsed several times  
¼ yellow sweet bell pepper  
salt to taste  
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil  
1 T quality red wine vinegar  
2 cups good firm bread, brimmed of its crust, toasted and cut into ½  
inch squares (save crumbs)  
3 fresh ripe tomatoes  
1 cup cucumber, peeled and diced  
½ medium Vidalia onion, sliced and soaked in water several times  
Freshly ground black pepper

1. Mash the garlic, anchovies and capers to a pulp using the back of a spoon or mortar and pestle.
2. Deseed the yellow bell pepper and cut into ¼ inch pieces. Put the pepper and the garlic-anchovy mixture into a mixing bowl and thoroughly toss with salt, olive oil and vinegar.
3. Put the bread and any crumbs from the trimming into a small mixing bowl. Puree one of the tomatoes, toss with bread, and allow to steep for 10 minutes or more.
4. Dice remaining tomatoes, discarding any seeds you can. Add to the soaked bread squares; then add cucumber, the soaked and drained onions, and several grinds of black pepper.
5. Toss with the garlic-anchovy mixture and serve soon.