

Fresh Tomato Salad

Boy, do we have tomatoes! California produces 90% of America's and nearly half the world's processed tomatoes (for juice, sauce, paste, salsa, etc.). Almost all of these are grown right here in the Central Valley, between Yuba City and Bakersfield. In mid-summer, we start seeing trucks with bins piled high with freshly picked tomatoes on their way to the canneries. The bins are piled so high that you often see piles of tomatoes along the road at intersections where the trucks turn. What do you do when you are swimming in fresh tomatoes and don't know how to can them? Make a tomato salad. About the same time we start seeing all those red tomatoes, our garden basil is full of leaves and blooming. Here is a simple but amazing salad that showcases the flavor of both the tomatoes and basil fresh from the garden. This dish pairs best with Lodi Barbera.



The Salad

8 medium sized ripe tomatoes, cut into 1/4 inch slices
1/2 medium red onion, sliced thin
2 TBS parsley, cut fine brunoise
8-10 fresh basil leaves

The Dressing

1 clove garlic, cut fine brunoise
1/4 cup tomato sauce
1/4 cup red wine vinegar
1 TBS brown cane sugar
1/2 tsp salt
1 TBS fresh basil, cut fine brunoise
1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp Dijon mustard
1/4 tsp freshly ground black pepper
1 tsp Old Uncle Lester's pepper sauce (or Panola Gourmet Pepper Sauce)
1 cup Lodi olive oil

Making the Dressing

Put all the dressing ingredients except the olive oil in a food processor and pulse a few times until the mixture is uniform. While running the processor, slowly drizzle the olive oil in.

Making the Salad

Lay the tomatoes out in a 9x13 Pyrex dish or large platter (with sides), overlapping each other. Scatter the onion slices around the top. Pour the dressing over the tomatoes to coat them evenly. Sprinkle with parsley flakes and drop the basil leaves on to decorate.