

HEIRLOOM TOMATO SALAD WITH NIÇOISE OLIVES, BURRATA, AND BASIL

This is how the dinner table conversation will go when you serve this salad at your next soireé. Your guest will say, “Oh yay, I love Caprese salad!” You will respond, “Oh my dear, this is not a Caprese Salad. Ordinary mozzarella cheese and tomato slices are so last year. This is a summer heirloom tomato salad with French olives, creamy burrata cheese, fresh basil, and a drizzle of my best olive oil.” Then you’ll drop the mic, or the serving spoons, and walk daintily back into the kitchen while your guests ogle with awe at your culinary prowess.

Oh, and in case your guests follow up with a few questions, here are some details. Some of the best Burrata in the world comes from the big and happy cows in Puglia, Italy, so ask your local grocer if they carry it. “Burrata” is the Italian word for “buttered” and known for its soft, buttery flavor and texture. It is a fresh cheese made from mozzarella and cream in which the outer shell is solid mozzarella, while the inside is a combination of both mozzarella and cream. The result is a pure, creamy, dreamy, silky, luscious center, and if you’ve never experienced it, don’t walk, RUN out and get some!

Prep time: 15 minutes

Serves: 6

Core the heirloom tomatoes and cut into ¼ inch slices. Season with sea salt and freshly ground pepper.

Arrange the slices overlapping on a large serving dish. Drizzle a little olive oil on top and lightly splash with vinegar. Tuck the burrata slices in and around the slabs of tomato and sprinkle with a few basil leaves.

Toss the cherry tomatoes, olives, and shallots gently in a medium bowl with ½ teaspoon of sea salt, a pinch of ground pepper, 2 tablespoons of olive oil, and 2 teaspoons of vinegar. Taste and adjust seasoning as needed. Arrange the salad on top of the burrata and scatter the remaining basil leaves on top for garnish.

Ingredients:

2 cups cherry tomatoes, cut in half
2 to 3 pounds heirloom tomatoes, assorted shapes, sizes, and colors
¼ cup Niçoise olives, pitted
¼ cup thinly sliced shallots
½ teaspoon Maldon sea salt flakes
freshly ground pepper, to taste
¼ cup torn basil leaves
1 pound burrata or mozzarella, cut into slices
extra-virgin olive oil
red wine vinegar