



Makes 6 cups
Preparation Time: 20 minutes
Cook Time: 10 minutes

INGREDIENTS:

4 sun-dried tomato pieces (not oil-packed)

¼ cup balsamic vinegar

2 tablespoons pine nuts

1 clove garlic

¼ teaspoon dried oregano

Sea salt, to taste

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

4 slices whole grain bread, cut into ¾-inch cubes

2 cups chopped romaine

2 medium tomatoes, cut into wedges

1 cup chopped red bell pepper

1 English cucumber, halved lengthwise, seeded, and thinly sliced

½ of a small red onion, thinly sliced

10 to 12 fresh basil leaves, chopped

Tuscan Panzanella with Sun-Dried Tomato Vinaigrette

Croutons are crucial to panzanella, which gets its name in part from the Italian word for bread. This low-fat version omits oil in favor of a juicy, lip-smacking-good Sun-Dried Tomato Vinaigrette. Serve this fresh and satisfying bread salad on its own or as part of a healthy **vegan Mediterranean** feast.

Tip: You can also leave the bread cubes out overnight to dry instead of baking them.

By Darshana Thacker Wendel

- 1** Make Sun-Dried Tomato Vinaigrette: Place sun-dried tomato pieces in a small bowl with enough hot water to cover. Soak 20 minutes; drain. In a blender combine rehydrated tomatoes, balsamic vinegar, pine nuts, garlic, oregano, and ½ cup water. Blend until smooth. Season to taste with sea salt and freshly ground black pepper. Set aside.
- 2** Preheat oven to 350°F. Spread bread cubes out in a single layer on a baking sheet. Bake 10 to 12 minutes or until toasted and crispy.
- 3** In a large bowl combine croutons with the next six ingredients (through basil). Toss well. Serve in bowls drizzled with Sun-Dried Tomato Vinaigrette. Store leftover vinaigrette in an airtight container in the refrigerator up to 3 days.