

Chef from the Hood Recipes



Chef:

Dan Berman, our Culinary Director

Restaurant:

Pacific Markets

Recipe:

Insalata Caprese



Insalata Caprese!

A first course for six.

Ingredients:

- 2 pounds heirloom tomatoes , cut in thick 1/4" slices
- 1 pound fresh mozzarella (two 8 ounce balls), sliced with a wire cutter
- 4 to 6 leaves of fresh basil, thin julienne
- 6 to 10 leaves of fresh basil, left whole
- 1/4 cup of extra virgin olive oil (Sonoma County)
- good coarse salt and fresh ground pepper

To prepare:

Assemble cheese & tomatoes on a flat platter & garnish with 4 to 6 leaves of fresh basil , thin julienne and 6 to 10 leaves of fresh basil , left whole Drizzle with 1/4 cup of extra virgin olive oil (Sonoma County). Add good coarse salt & fresh ground black pepper to taste.

About Mozzarella:

Two styles of mozzarella are produced in California. Low moisture mozzarella in its familiar shrink-wrapped ball shape is meltable, mild and low in fat. It's most commonly found topping pizza and in lasagna. Fresh mozzarella is a softer cheese, also low in fat but more perishable than low moisture mozzarella. This is the cheese you'll find throughout Italy where it's most often served with basil and tomatoes as Insalata Caprese .

Small factories south of Naples continue, in a centuries-old tradition, to make water buffalo mozzarella for their local customers, who line up everyday to buy this delicacy. The fresh mozzarella carried at Pacific Market is made of cow's milk using age-old Italian cheesemaking methods. Tubs of bocatini or "little bites" or larger half pound balls are packed in water to keep them fresh. The bocatini tossed in herbs is an easy addition to antipasta (an appetizer plate).

Summer, when fresh basil is abundant and colorful heirloom tomatoes are ripe, is the time to create this salad, an easy, incredibly delicious marriage of ingredients that all Italians hold dear.