15 Easy Italian Vegetable Recipes (Rustic Garden Cooking)

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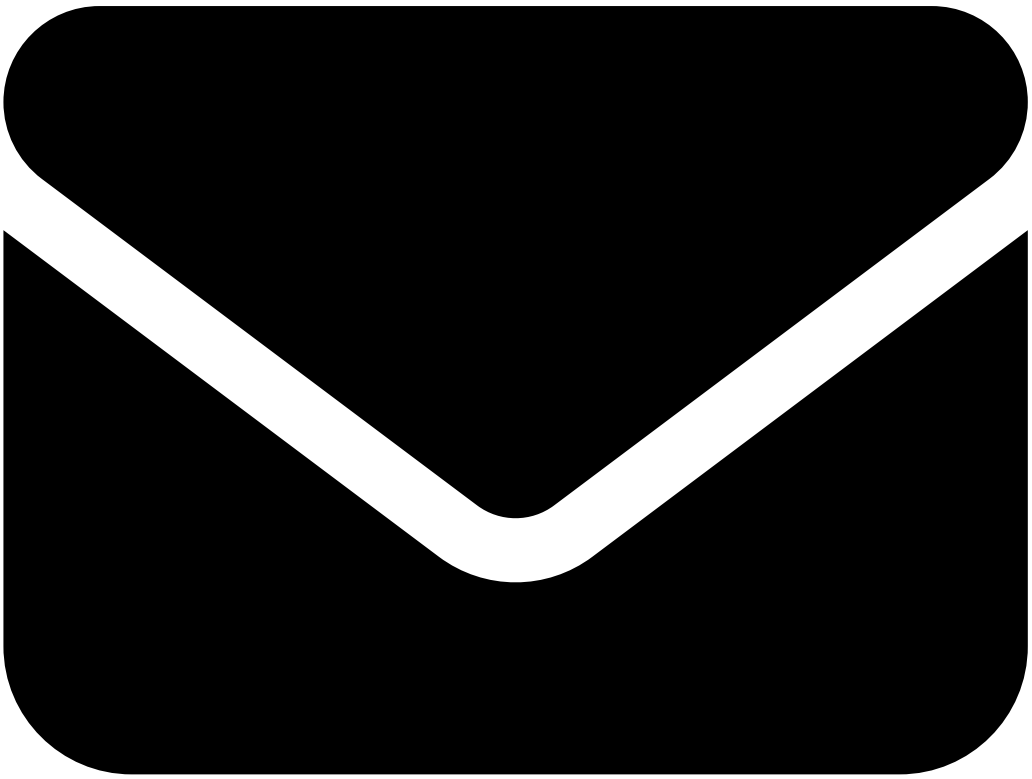




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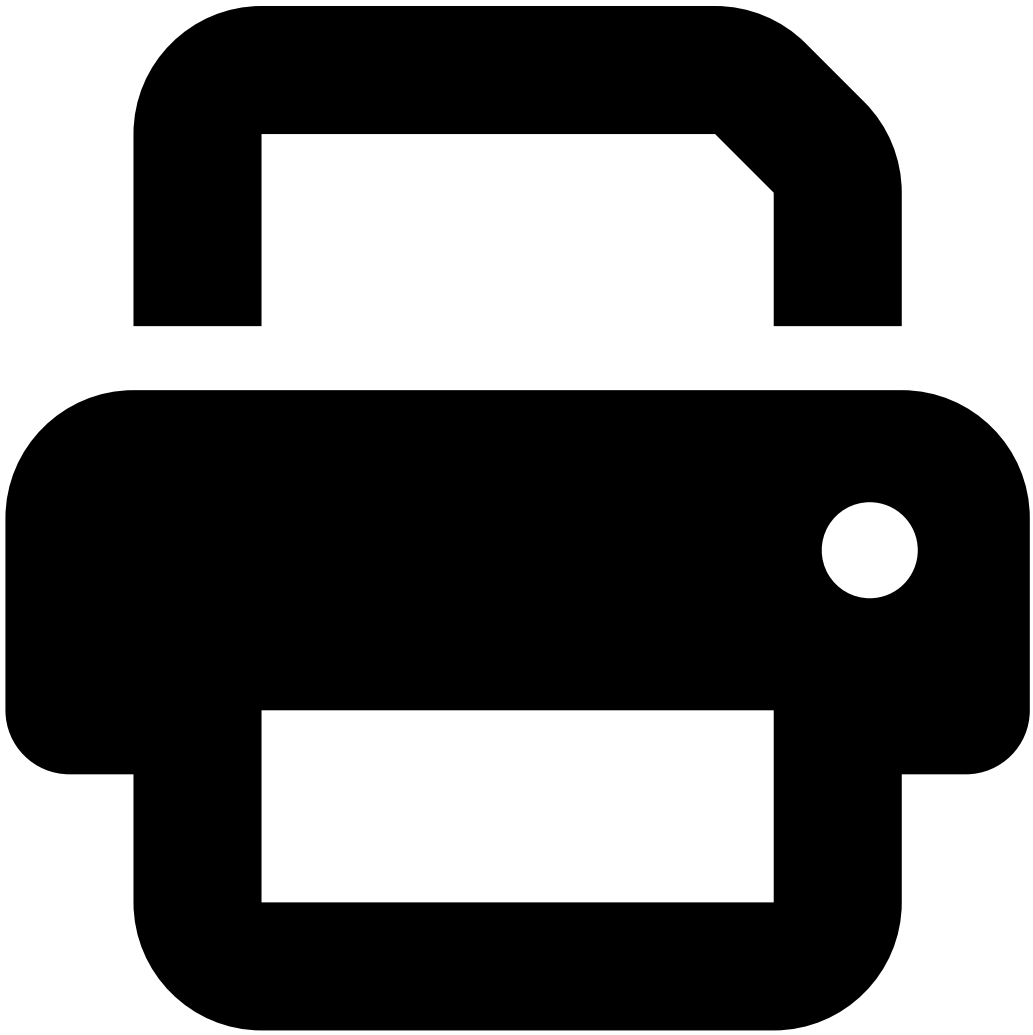

Simple, seasonal Italian vegetable dishes inspired by garden cooking and traditional Italian countryside kitchens

I grew up on a farm in Tuscany, where we didn’t really think in terms of “recipes” the way people do now—we thought in seasons. What was growing in the garden or being harvested that day was what ended up on the table.

In summer, it was overflowing tomatoes, zucchini, peppers, and eggplant. In the cooler months, it shifted to heartier greens and root vegetables, all cooked simply with olive oil, garlic, and whatever herbs we had growing nearby.

That way of cooking stayed with me.

Even now, living in California, I still cook vegetables the same way—seasonally, simply, and without overcomplicating them. Because when ingredients are good, they don’t need much else.

This collection of **15 easy Italian vegetable recipes** is inspired by that kind of cooking. Rustic, honest dishes made from whatever is fresh, abundant, and ready to be used. From eggplant to slow-cooked vegetable stews, these are the recipes that taste like home to me. These are the kinds of recipes that show up on the table when the garden is overflowing—zucchini, eggplant, tomatoes, peppers, and whatever is in season.

Eggplant Caponata (Sweet & Tangy Sicilian Style)

A classic Sicilian eggplant dish made with sautéed eggplant, celery, olives, capers, and a sweet-sour tomato base.
Best served at room temperature with crusty bread.

GO TO RECIPE

Italian marinated Fried Zucchini (zucchini alla scapece)

Thinly sliced zucchini cooked quickly in olive oil with garlic, parsley, and a pinch of salt.

Simple, fast, and perfect for summer dinners.

GO TO RECIPE

Baked Three Cheese Appetizer with Roasted Cherry Tomatoes

A warm, rustic Italian-style baked appetizer made with three creamy cheeses and topped with sweet, slow-roasted cherry tomatoes. Bubbly, rich, and full of flavor, it’s perfect served straight from the oven with crusty bread for dipping.

GO TO RECIPE

Easy Summer Zucchini and tomato Gratin

A simple Italian zucchini and tomato gratin baked with fresh summer vegetables, garlic, herbs, Parmesan cheese, and a crispy golden breadcrumb topping. Perfect as an easy summer side dish.GO TO RECIPE

Stuffed Tomatoes with Rice (Roman Style)

Ripe tomatoes hollowed and filled with seasoned rice, garlic, herbs, and olive oil, then baked until tender.

A true Roman classic.

GO TO RECIPE

Scarpaccia (Tuscan Zucchini Flatbread)

A thin, savory zucchini flatbread made with grated zucchini, flour, olive oil, and Parmesan.

Crispy on the edges, soft in the center.GO TO RECIPE

Ciambotta (Italian Vegetable Stew)

A Southern Italian vegetable stew made with zucchini, eggplant, peppers, tomatoes, and onions simmered together until tender and rich.

Comfort food at its best.

GO TO RECIPE

Simple Italian roasted Tomato Basil Sauce

Fresh tomatoes roasted with garlic, olive oil, and basil until rich and naturally sweet.
Use it for pasta, chicken, or bread dipping.GO TO RECIPE

Italian Roasted Peppers (Marinated)

Charred peppers peeled and marinated in olive oil, garlic, and parsley.

Serve as antipasto or side dish.

GO TO RECIPE

Sugo Crudo – No-Cook Italian Tomato Sauce

In Italy, *sugo crudo* – meaning “raw sauce” – is a summertime favorite that captures the very essence of fresh, ripe tomatoes. Sweet, juicy tomatoes are paired with fragrant basil, garlic, and rich extra virgin olive oil for a pasta

dish that’s as simple as it is unforgettable. Best of all, it’s ready in the time it takes to cook your pasta.GO TO RECIPE

Italian Potatoes, tomatoes and green beans

Fresh green beans and potatoes simmered together in a light tomato sauce until deliciously tender. This recipe brings me back to my childhood. My mother would prepare this for dinner when the tomatoes and green beans were in season. She would instill my sisters and I in picking and trimming the green beans, and we would sit under the olive trees in the hills of Tuscany trimming green beans, telling stories and making priceless memories.GO TO RECIPE

Classic Italian Bruschetta Recipe (Easy Tomato Basil Bruschetta)

Crispy toasted bread topped with juicy ripe tomatoes, fresh basil, garlic, and extra virgin olive oil—this classic Italian bruschetta is simple, fresh, and full of bright garden flavor.GO TO RECIPE

Easy Sicilian Potato Salad (No Mayo)

A light and rustic Sicilian-style potato salad made with tender potatoes, fresh garden tomatoes, olive oil, vinegar, red onion, and fresh herbs—no mayo needed. Simple, bright, and

full of Mediterranean flavor.GO TO RECIPE

Italian green beans and Tomatoes

Fresh green beans and ripe tomatoes simmered together with olive oil, garlic, and herbs for a simple, rustic Italian side dish. Light, savory, and full of garden flavor.

GO TO RECIPE

Oven baked Tomatoes oreganata

Juicy tomatoes baked until tender and topped with a crisp, garlicky oregano breadcrumb mixture. A simple Southern Italian-style dish that’s savory, aromatic, and perfect as a side or antipasto.GO TO RECIPE

Italian vegetable cooking has always been about simplicity—taking what’s fresh, seasonal, and abundant, and turning it into something deeply satisfying without overcomplicating it.

From crispy eggplant cutlets to slow-baked tomatoes and rustic skillet vegetables, these dishes are a reminder that good food doesn’t need much more than olive oil, garlic, and time.

Whether you’re cooking from your garden, shopping at a farmers market, or just trying to bring more vegetables to the table, these recipes are meant to be flexible, comforting, and full of flavor.

This is the kind of cooking that never really goes out of style—it just changes with the seasons.

Easy Summer Zucchini and tomato Gratin (Italian side dish)

Easy Summer Zucchini and tomato Gratin (Italian side dish)

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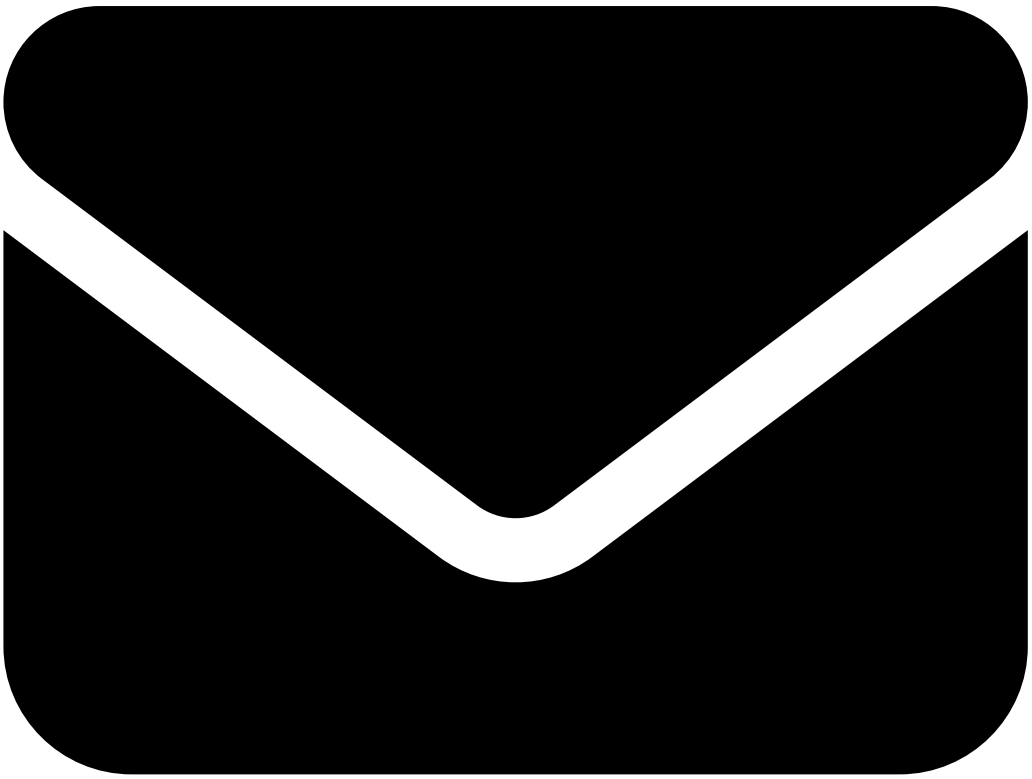




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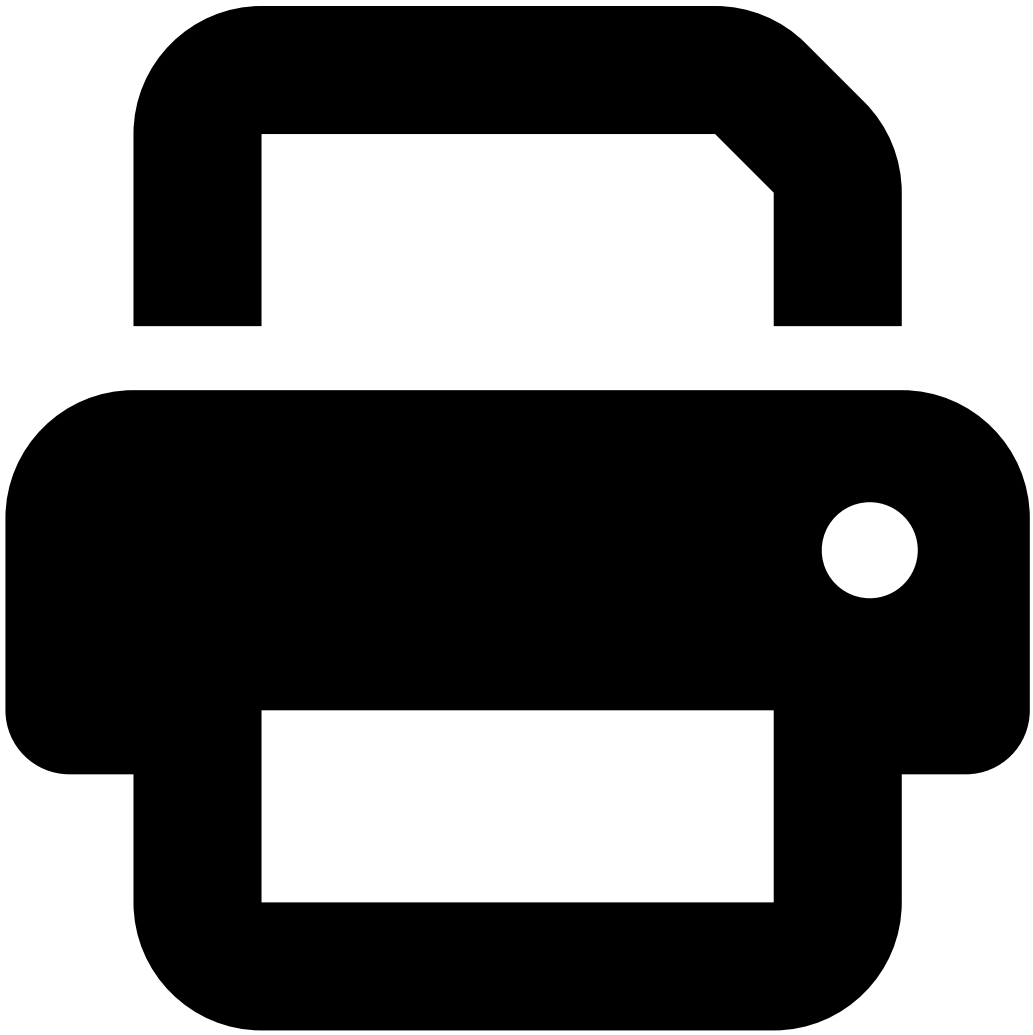

There is nothing quite like the abundance of a summer garden, and this Summer Zucchini and Tomato Gratin is my absolute favorite way to celebrate fresh seasonal produce, whether homegrown or from you’re local farmers market.
When zucchini and tomatoes are at their peak in summer, this easy Italian-style gratin is one of the best ways to use them. Thin slices of tender zucchini are layered with juicy tomatoes, garlic, olive oil, herbs, and a crispy golden breadcrumb topping that bakes into the perfect rustic side dish.

This is the kind of simple Southern Italian recipe that lets fresh ingredients shine. It pairs beautifully with grilled meats, fish, chicken cutlets, or even a crusty loaf of bread for a light summer dinner.

It’s easy enough for weeknights but beautiful enough to bring to the table for summer gatherings.

Things to know about this Easy Summer Zucchini and tomato Gratin (Italian side dish)

Tips for the Best Zucchini Gratin

- Use ripe summer tomatoes for the best flavor
- Salt the zucchini first so the gratin doesn’t become watery
- Add mozzarella between layers for a richer version
- Use homemade breadcrumbs for extra texture
- Let the dish rest 10 minutes before serving

Why You’ll Love This Zucchini and Tomato Gratin

- Easy and budget friendly
- Uses fresh summer produce
- Crispy golden topping without being heavy
- Naturally vegetarian
- Perfect make-ahead side dish
- Tastes even better with garden zucchini and tomatoes

Storage

Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

Reheat in the oven at 350°F until warmed through, or enjoy cold or room temperature the next day.

What to Serve With Zucchini and Tomato Gratin

This Italian summer side dish pairs perfectly with:

- Crispy pan- fried chicken cutlets
- Stove top Italian sausage and peppers
- Simple roasted chicken and potatoes
- Fresh crusty 4- ingredient Italian Baguette bread and olive oil

You can also serve it alongside pasta salads or antipasto spreads during summer entertaining.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I make this ahead of time?

Yes. Assemble the gratin a few hours ahead in a

- **2 to 2.5 quart baking dish**
- Around **11×7-inch** or **9×13-inch** works perfectly

and refrigerate until ready to bake.

Can I add cheese?

Absolutely. Fresh mozzarella, provolone, or fontina work beautifully.

Is this similar to ratatouille?

It has a similar rustic vegetable style, but this version is simpler and more traditionally Italian with breadcrumbs and Parmesan.

Final Thoughts

This easy summer zucchini and tomato gratin is one of those classic Italian side dishes that proves simple ingredients can create incredible flavor. Crispy on top, tender underneath, and packed with fresh summer produce, it’s the perfect recipe to make all season long.

Easy Summer Zucchini and Tomato Gratin (Italian Side Dish)



A simple Italian zucchini and tomato gratin baked with fresh summer vegetables, garlic, herbs, Parmesan cheese, and a crispy golden breadcrumb topping. Perfect as an easy summer side dish.

- 3 medium zucchini, thinly sliced
- 3 large ripe Roma tomatoes, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup Italian breadcrumbs
- 1/2 cup grated Parmigiano Reggiano
- 3 Tbsp olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh basil
- 2 Tbsp. chopped Italian parsley
- Salt and pepper to taste

1. **. Prepare the vegetables**

   Preheat the oven to 400°F.

   Slice the zucchini and tomatoes into thin, even rounds. Lightly salt the zucchini and let it sit for about 10 minutes to release excess moisture. Pat dry with paper towels.

2. **Assemble the gratin**

   Grease a baking dish with olive oil.

   Layer the zucchini and tomatoes slightly overlapping throughout the dish. Sprinkle garlic, basil, parsley, salt, and pepper between the layers.

3. **Add the topping**

   In a small bowl, combine the breadcrumbs, Parmigiano Reggiano, and olive oil until evenly coated.

   Sprinkle the breadcrumb mixture over the vegetables and drizzle lightly with extra olive oil.

4. **Bake**

   Bake for 30–35 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender and the top is golden brown and crispy.

   For extra color, broil for 1–2 minutes at the end.

   Serve warm or at room temperature.

Side Dish
Italian
zucchini tomato bake Italian side dish

Easy Italian Tomato Salad with Heirloom Tomatoes

Easy Italian Tomato Salad with Heirloom Tomatoes

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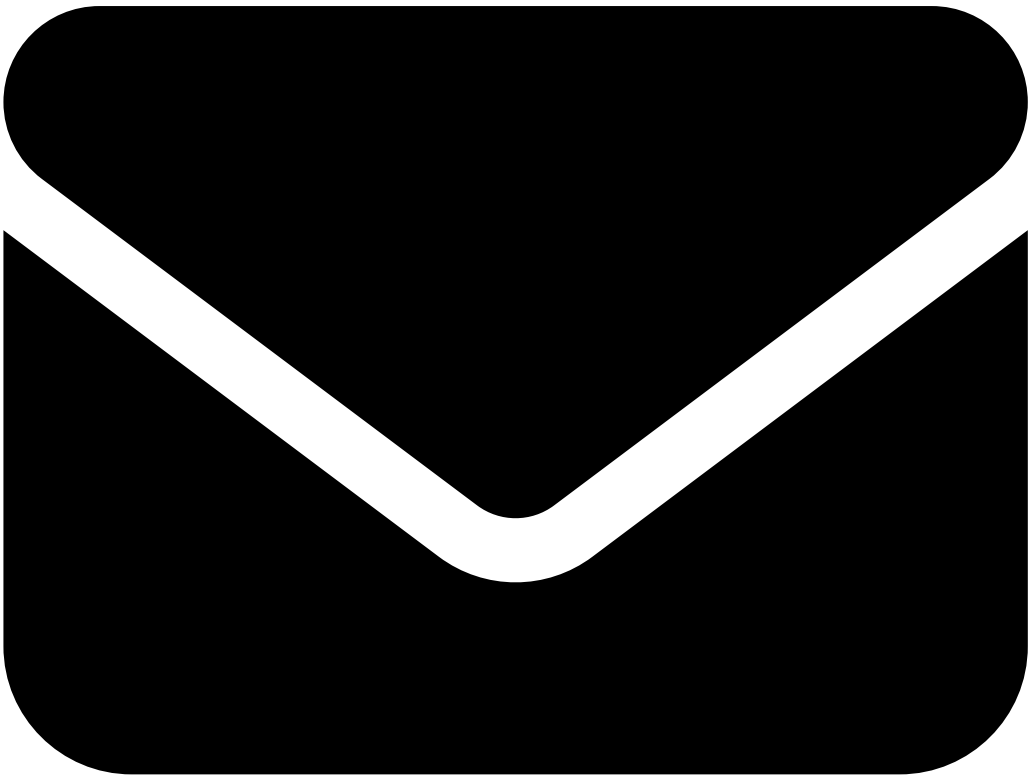




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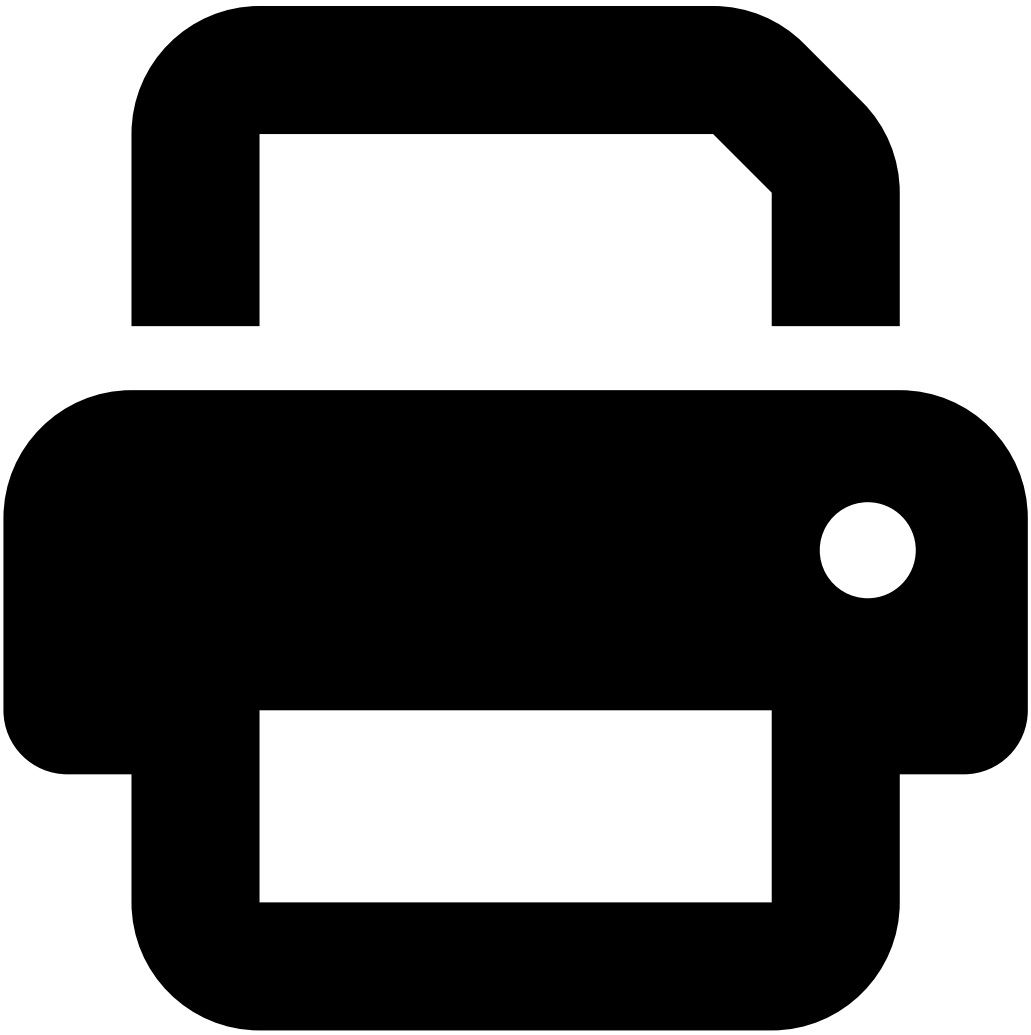

The Simple Italian Tomato Salad That Barely Needs a Recipe

Some of the best Italian recipes are the simplest ones, and this Italian tomato salad is proof. When tomatoes are perfectly ripe and in season, all you really need is good olive oil, fresh basil, oregano, salt, and black pepper.

This is the kind of rustic Italian side dish that shows up all summer long alongside grilled meats, crusty bread, pasta, or seafood dinners. It’s fresh, light, and tastes like summer in Italy with almost no effort at all.

If you have beautiful heirloom tomatoes on your counter, this is exactly what to make.

Things to know about this Easy Italian Tomato Salad with Heirloom Tomatoes

Tips for the Best Tomato Salad

- Use the ripest tomatoes you can find. Summer heirloom tomatoes have the best flavor.
- Use high-quality extra virgin olive oil since the dressing is so simple.
- Don’t refrigerate tomatoes before making the salad – it dulls the flavor.
- Finish with flaky sea salt for extra flavor and texture.

Variations

Add Mozzarella

Turn it into a Caprese-inspired tomato salad with fresh mozzarella slices.

Add Olives

Kalamata or Castelvetrano olives add a salty Mediterranean flavor.

Add Cucumbers

For extra freshness and crunch, toss in sliced cucumbers.

Make it Sicilian-Inspired

Add red onions, capers, and a splash of red wine vinegar.

Storage

This salad is best enjoyed fresh, but leftovers can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 1 day. The tomatoes will soften and release more juices as they sit.

Frequently Asked Questions

What tomatoes are best for tomato salad?

Heirloom tomatoes are ideal because they’re juicy, sweet, and full of flavor, but Roma or vine-ripened tomatoes also work well.

Can I make this ahead of time?

You can slice the tomatoes ahead of time, but wait to season them until just before serving for the freshest flavor.

Is Italian tomato salad the same as Caprese salad?

Not exactly. Caprese salad includes mozzarella cheese, while a traditional Italian tomato salad keeps the focus mainly on the tomatoes, olive oil, basil, and seasonings.

What to Serve with Italian Tomato Salad

- Thin no knead Focaccia rolls
- Easy Sicilian Potato salad (no mayo)
- Crispy chicken cutlets
- Italian pesto fusilli pasta salad
- Acqua pazza Fish in crazy water

Easy Italian Tomato Salad with Heirloom Tomatoes



Easy Italian tomato salad made with heirloom tomatoes, fresh basil, oregano, and extra virgin olive oil. A simple, authentic summer side dish ready in minutes.

- 4 -5 large large heirloom tomatoes, sliced
- 4 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 Tsp dried oregano
- 1/2 cup Thinly sliced red onions
- 5-6 Fresh basil leaves
- salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

1. Slice the heirloom tomatoes and arrange them on a large serving platter or bowl.
2. top with the sliced red onions
3. Drizzle generously with extra virgin olive oil.
4. Sprinkle with oregano, salt, and black pepper.
5. Top with fresh basil leaves.

6. Let the salad sit for about 10 minutes before serving so the flavors can come together.

Salad
Italian
best heirloom tomato salad recipe Italian

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15 Italian Summer Salads You'll Want to Make All Year

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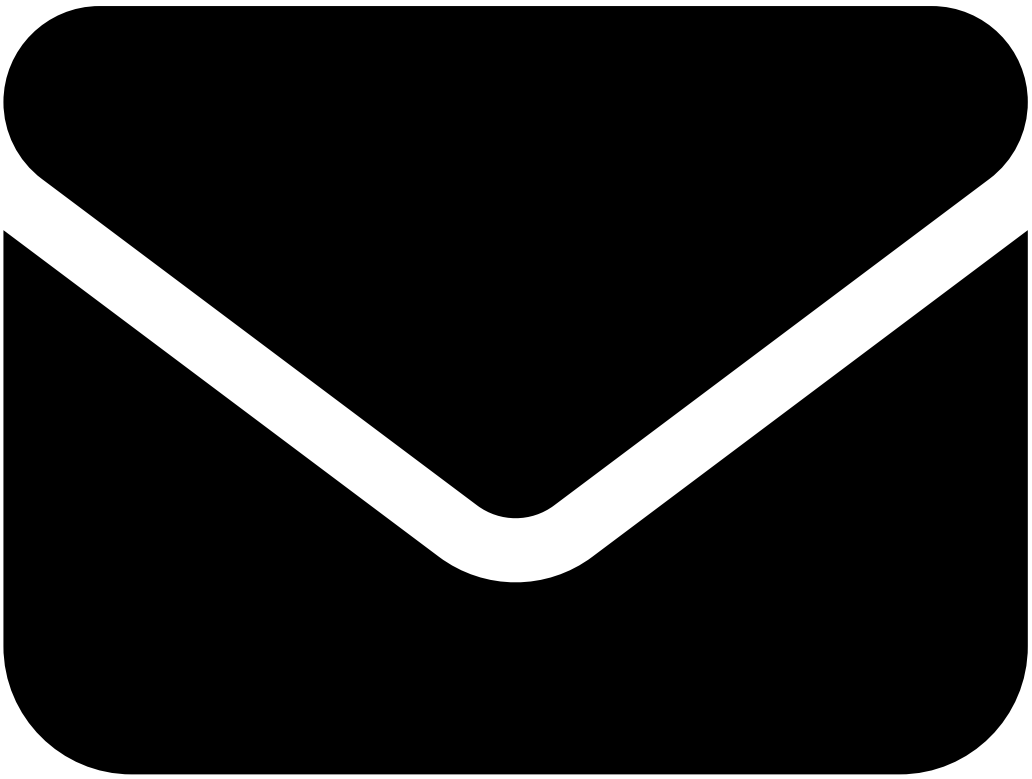




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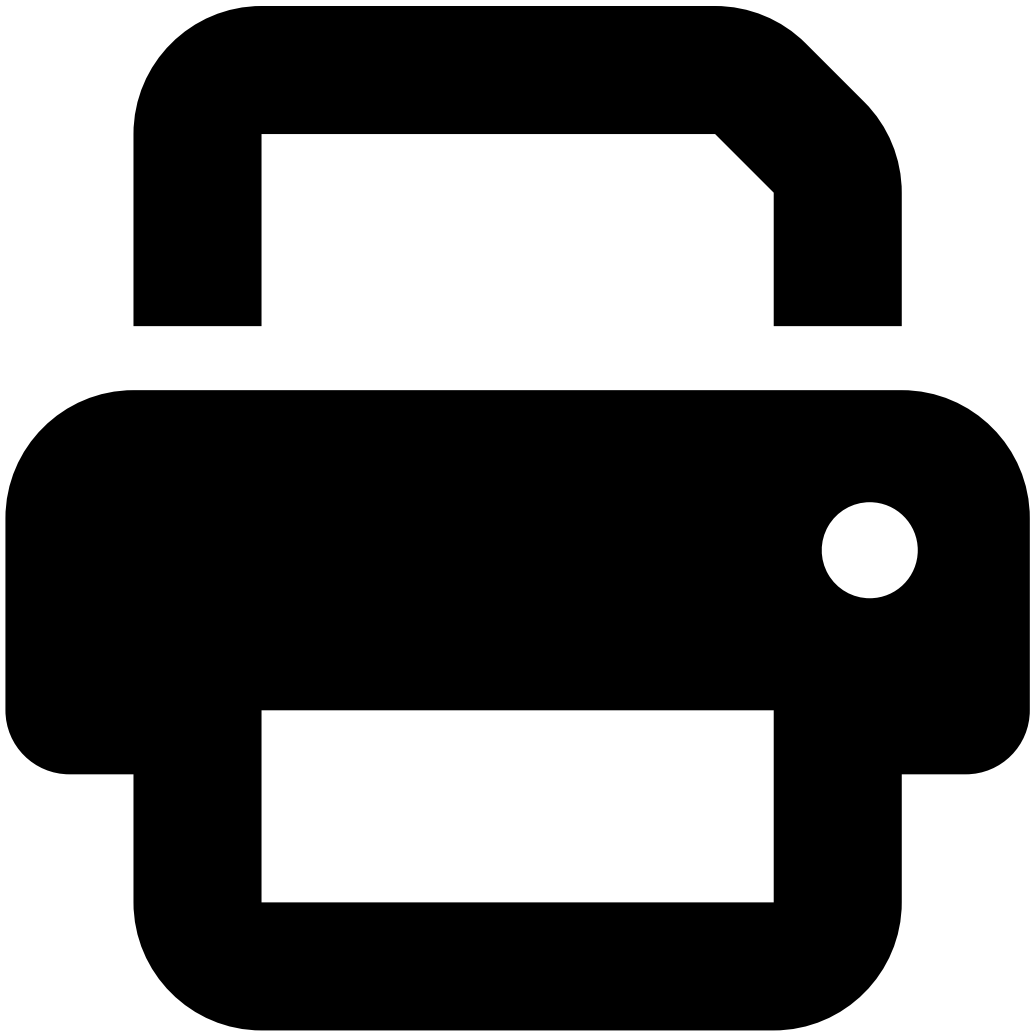


Italian salads are all about simplicity, seasonality, and bold fresh flavor. Growing up around Italian cooking, salads were never just an afterthought on the table. From simple tomato salads in the summer to hearty pasta salads for family gatherings, they always brought freshness and balance to the meal.

This collection of Italian salads includes everything from rustic Tuscan classics to pasta salads, seafood-inspired dishes, and fresh summer favorites made with ingredients like tomatoes, mozzarella, basil, olives, beans, and roasted vegetables. Whether you’re looking for an easy side dish, a light lunch, or something to bring to a summer gathering, these Italian-inspired salads are recipes you’ll come back to all year long.

Easy Summer Caprese Tomato Salad

Caprese salad is one of the most iconic Italian salads, made with juicy tomatoes, fresh mozzarella, basil, olive oil, and a sprinkle of salt. It’s proof that simple ingredients can create something unforgettable.

This fresh summer salad comes together in minutes and is perfect for warm-weather dinners, backyard gatherings, or an easy appetizer.

GO TO RECIPE

Watermelon Cucumber Feta Salad

This watermelon cucumber feta salad is refreshing, crisp, and perfect for hot summer days. Sweet watermelon pairs beautifully with salty feta, crunchy cucumbers, and fresh herbs for a salad that feels light and cooling.

It’s a great addition to cookouts, picnics, and outdoor dinners when you want something bright and fresh.

GO TO RECIPE

Quick Italian Bread Salad (Panzanella)

This classic Tuscan bread salad is one of the best ways to use up ripe summer tomatoes and day-old bread. The bread soaks up the garlicky vinaigrette and tomato juices, creating a rustic salad that feels simple but incredibly flavorful.

Panzanella is perfect during tomato season and works beautifully as a light lunch, picnic dish, or side for grilled meats and seafood.

GO TO RECIPE

Italian Chickpea Cucumber Tomato Salad

This Italian-inspired chickpea salad combines crisp cucumbers, juicy tomatoes, herbs, and hearty chickpeas for a fresh and protein-packed dish. It has Mediterranean flavors with a simple vinaigrette that keeps everything light and vibrant.

It’s an easy make-ahead salad for lunches, potlucks, or summer dinners when you want something refreshing but satisfying.

GO TO RECIPE

Rustic Italian Roasted Pepper Salad

Roasted pepper salad is a simple Italian side dish that highlights sweet roasted peppers, olive oil, garlic, and herbs. The flavors deepen as the salad sits, making it even better after a little time in the fridge.

This colorful salad pairs beautifully with grilled meats, crusty bread, or antipasto platters and is especially popular during summer entertaining.

GO TO RECIPE

Peach Caprese Salad with Fresh Mozzarella

Peach caprese salad is a sweet summer twist on the classic Italian caprese. Juicy peaches pair beautifully with creamy mozzarella, fresh basil, and olive oil for a salad that feels elegant but effortless.

This salad is perfect during peak peach season and works well as an appetizer, side dish, or light lunch.

GO TO RECIPE

Easy Sicilian Potato Salad(no mayo)

Easy Sicilian Potato Salad (No Mayo) is a light, authentic Italian side dish made with tender potatoes, olive oil, capers, and fresh herbs. Simple, flavorful, and perfect for summer gatherings, this traditional Mediterranean recipe is a fresh twist on classic potato salad.GO TO RECIPE

Tomato and Cucumber Salad

Tomato and cucumber salad is one of the simplest and freshest Italian-inspired side dishes you can make. With ripe tomatoes, crisp cucumbers, olive oil, herbs, and vinegar, it lets fresh summer produce shine.

This easy salad pairs with almost any meal and comes together in just minutes, making it perfect for everyday summer cooking.

GO TO RECIPE

Pesto Tortellini Pasta Salad

Tortellini pasta salad is a heartier Italian-inspired salad filled with cheesy pasta, pesto, fresh vegetables, and plenty of flavor. It’s rich enough to serve as a main dish but still light and fresh enough for summer gatherings.

This is one of those pasta salads that always disappears quickly at potlucks and family dinners.

GO TO RECIPE

Summer Orzo Salad with Italian Vinaigrette (Easy & Fresh Recipe)

This summer orzo salad is loaded with fresh cucumber, tomatoes, peppers, red onion, and mozzarella, all tossed in a simple Italian vinaigrette. Perfect for BBQs, meal prep, or a light summer lunch.
GO TO RECIPE

Zucchini alla Scapece

Zucchini alla Scapece is a Southern Italian zucchini salad made with fried zucchini, vinegar, garlic, and fresh mint. The zucchini marinates as it rests, creating bold flavor with very simple ingredients.

This dish is delicious served cold or at room temperature and is one of the best Italian summer side dishes.

GO TO RECIPE **Italian Pesto Fusilli Pasta Salad**

This pesto fusilli pasta salad is fresh, herbaceous, and full of classic Italian flavors. The twisted pasta holds onto the pesto perfectly while tomatoes, mozzarella, and fresh basil add brightness and texture.

It’s a crowd-friendly pasta salad that works for BBQs, meal prep, summer lunches, and easy weeknight dinners.

GO TO RECIPE **Easy Summer Italian Cobb Pasta Salad**

This Italian-style cobb pasta salad combines fresh vegetables, pasta, cheese, and savory toppings into one colorful and satisfying dish. It takes inspiration from classic cobb salad while adding Mediterranean and Italian flavors.

It’s ideal for meal prep, summer parties, and busy nights when you want a full meal in one bowl.

GO TO RECIPE

Roasted Zucchini Panzanella Salad Recipe

This roasted zucchini Panzanella salad is rustic, simple, and the perfect way to let those garden veggies shine. With toasted bread, juicy tomatoes, and a punchy vinaigrette, it’s everything I love about summer on a plate.

GO TO RECIPE

One-Pan Orzo with summer vegetables

This one-pan orzo with summer vegetables is light, fresh, and packed with Italian-inspired flavor. Made with tender orzo, zucchini, tomatoes, peppers, and herbs, it’s a simple dish that works beautifully as both a warm side dish or a chilled pasta salad.

The vegetables soften and release their flavor into the orzo as everything cooks together, creating an easy summer recipe that’s perfect for weeknight dinners, meal prep, picnics, or outdoor gatherings. Serve it warm straight from the pan or cold as a refreshing summer pasta salad.

Finale Thoughts

From fresh tomato salads and rustic bread salads to hearty pasta salads and seasonal vegetable dishes, Italian salads prove that simple ingredients can create incredible flavor. Whether you’re planning a summer gathering, looking for an easy side dish, or putting together a light lunch, these recipes bring together the fresh, vibrant flavors that make Italian-inspired cooking so timeless.

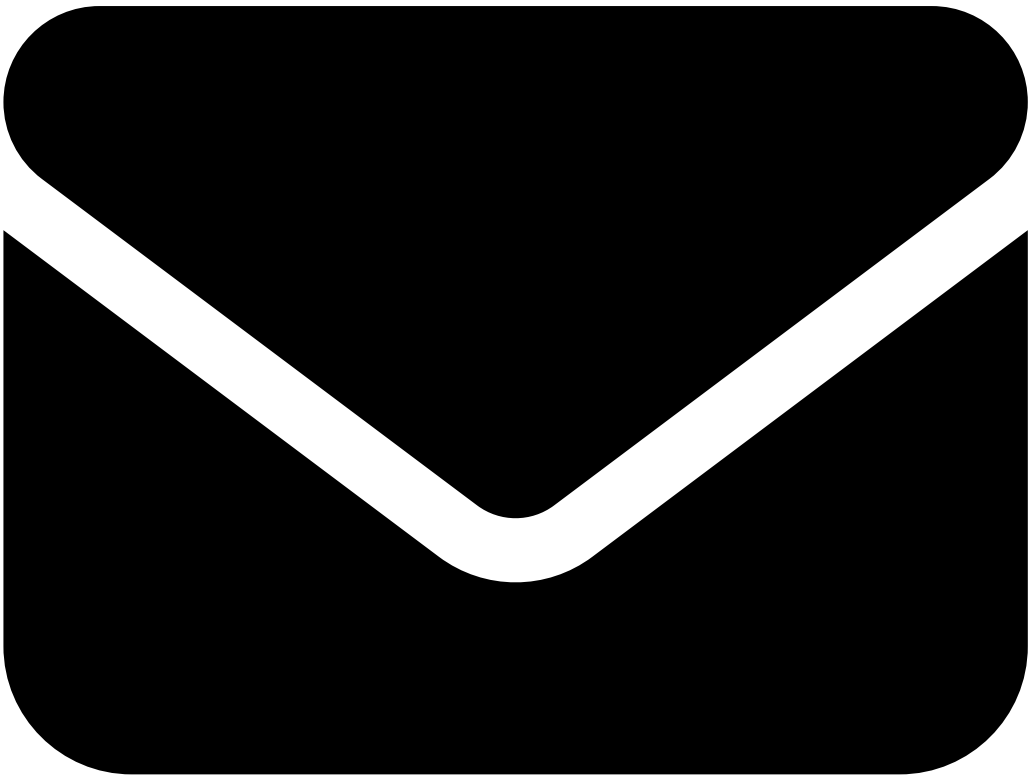
Keep this roundup bookmarked for warm-weather dinners, holiday tables, potlucks, and everyday meals throughout the year. With everything from classic caprese to pasta salads and vegetable-

forward favorites, there’s an Italian salad here for every season and occasion.

Summer Orzo Salad with Italian Vinaigrette (Easy & Fresh Recipe)

Summer Orzo Salad with Italian Vinaigrette (Easy & Fresh Recipe) This post may contain affiliate links, that help support this blog. If you make a purchase through these links, I may earn a commission—at no cost to you. For more information read my disclosure policy.





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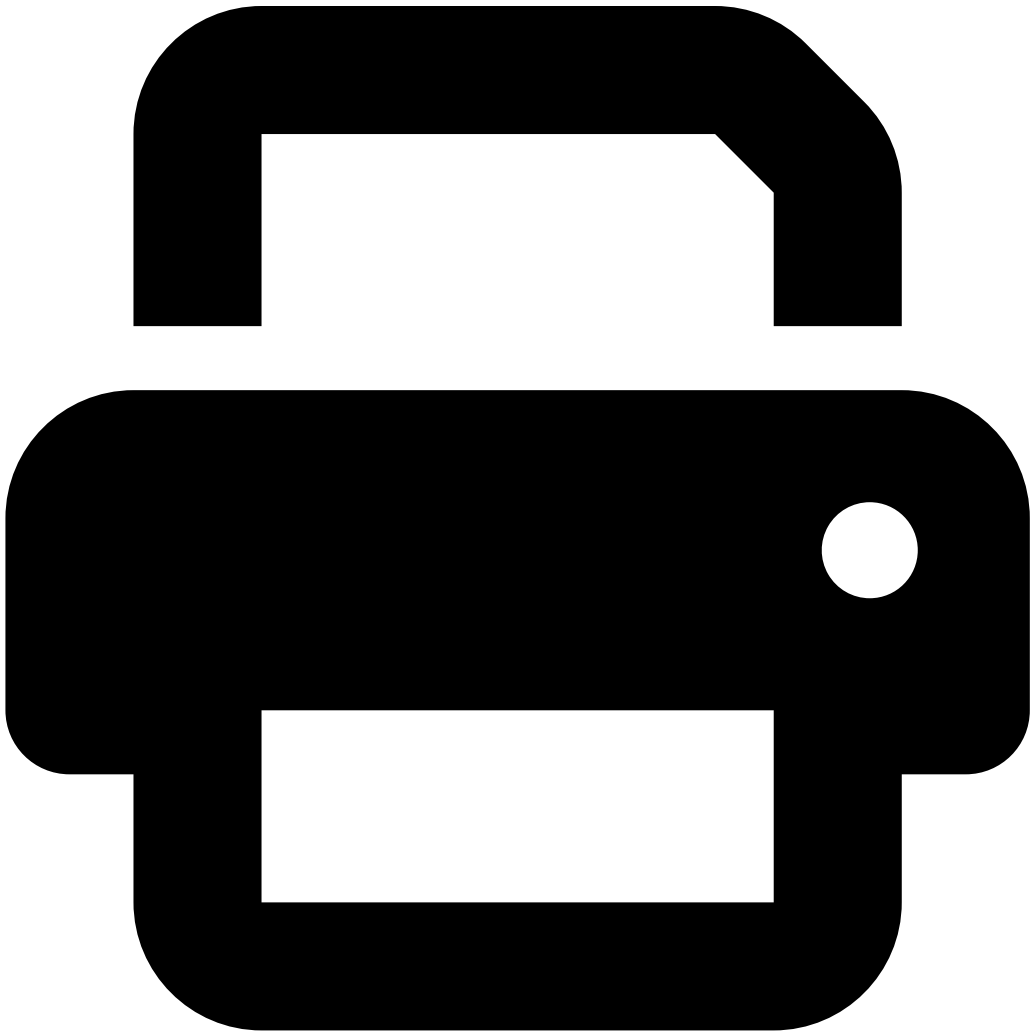

This is one of those “clean out the fridge but make it Italian” kind of meals. I love how the orzo soaks up the vinaigrette while still staying light, and the mix of crunchy cucumber, sweet tomatoes, and peppers keeps every bite interesting.

The mozzarella makes it feel a little more filling without weighing it down, and honestly, it’s one of those salads that tastes even better after it sits for a bit in the fridge.

Perfect for meal prep, BBQs, or just those nights when it’s too hot to cook anything complicated.

Things to know about Summer Orzo

Salad with Italian Vinaigrette recipe

This orzo salad is one of those recipes that gets better as it sits. The pasta soaks up the Italian vinaigrette, so the flavor deepens after a little time in the fridge. If you're making it ahead, I like to reserve a small splash of dressing to toss in right before serving to freshen it up.

You can also easily switch things up here—add grilled chicken, salami, chickpeas, or whatever vegetables you need to use up. It's very flexible and forgiving.

Storage

Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to **3–4 days**.
If the salad feels a little dry after chilling, just drizzle in a bit of olive oil or extra vinaigrette and toss before serving.

I don't recommend freezing this one—the texture of the vegetables and mozzarella won't hold up well.

Serving Tips

Serve it cold or slightly chilled. It's perfect for BBQs, picnics, meal prep lunches, or as a fresh side dish next to grilled chicken or fish.

If you loved this summer orzo salad, you'll also love a few of my other fresh Italian-inspired favorites:

 Try my **Italian Potato Salad (No Mayo)** for another light and flavorful side dish
 Or my **Zucchini Pasta with Tomatoes** for an easy weeknight dinner
 And if you're building a summer menu, don't miss my **15 Light & Fresh Italian Summer Recipes** roundup

For more recipes like this, make sure to check out the full blog and save this one for your next cookout—it's a repeat all summer long.

Summer Orzo Salad with Italian Vinaigrette (Easy & Fresh Recipe)



This summer orzo salad is loaded with fresh cucumber, tomatoes, peppers, red onion, and mozzarella, all tossed in a simple Italian vinaigrette. Perfect for BBQs, meal prep, or a light summer lunch.

- 2 cups dried orzo
- 1 cup cucumbers cut into small dice

- 1 cup cherry tomatoes cut into small dice
- 1 cup green bell peppers cut into small dice
- 1 cup red bell peppers cut into small dice
- 1 cup mozzarella pearls (or cubed fresh mozzarella)
- 1/2 cup red onion cut into small dice
- salt and pepper to taste

Italian Vinaigrette

- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/3 cup red wine vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. dried oregano
- 2 tsp. minced garlic
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- salt and pepper to taste

1. Cook the orzo according to package directions until al dente. Drain and let cool
2. While the orzo cools, prep all the vegetables.
3. In a small bowl or jar, whisk together all vinaigrette ingredients until well combined.
4. In a large bowl, combine the cooled orzo, cucumber, tomatoes, bell pepper, red onion, and mozzarella.
5. Pour the vinaigrette over everything and toss until fully coated.
6. Taste and adjust seasoning if needed. Chill for 15–30 minutes before serving if you want the flavors to really come together.

Side Dish
Italian
easy summer orzo salad with Italian dressing

Classic Italian Bruschetta Recipe (Easy Tomato Basil Bruschetta)

Classic Italian Bruschetta Recipe (Easy Tomato Basil Bruschetta)

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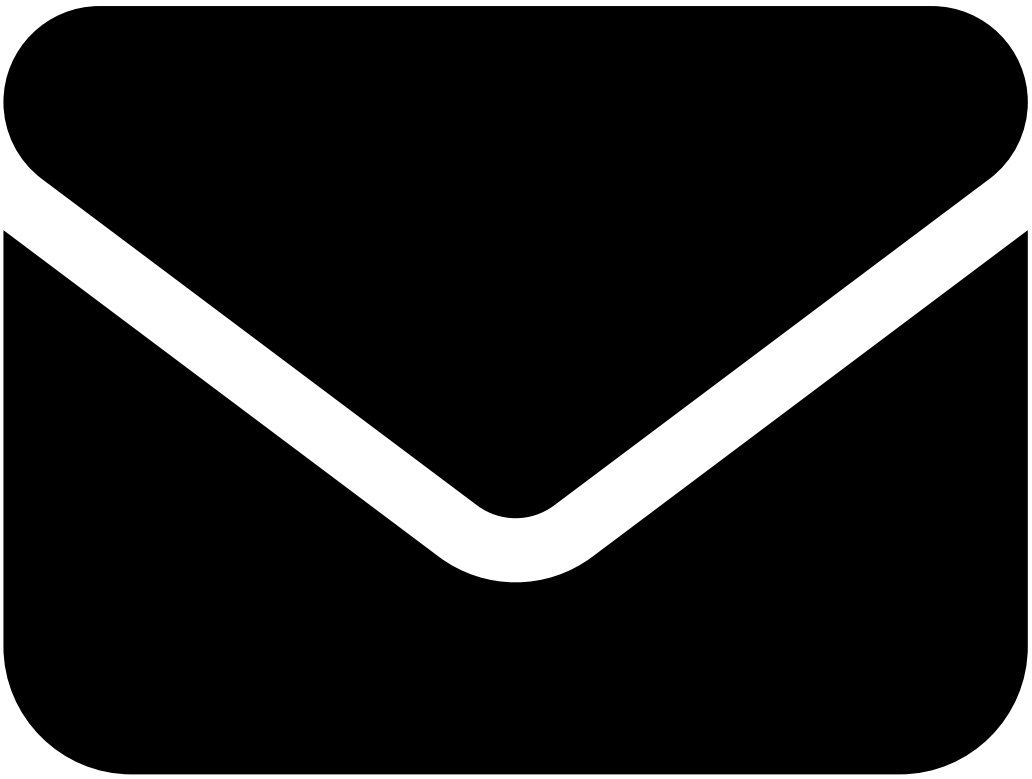




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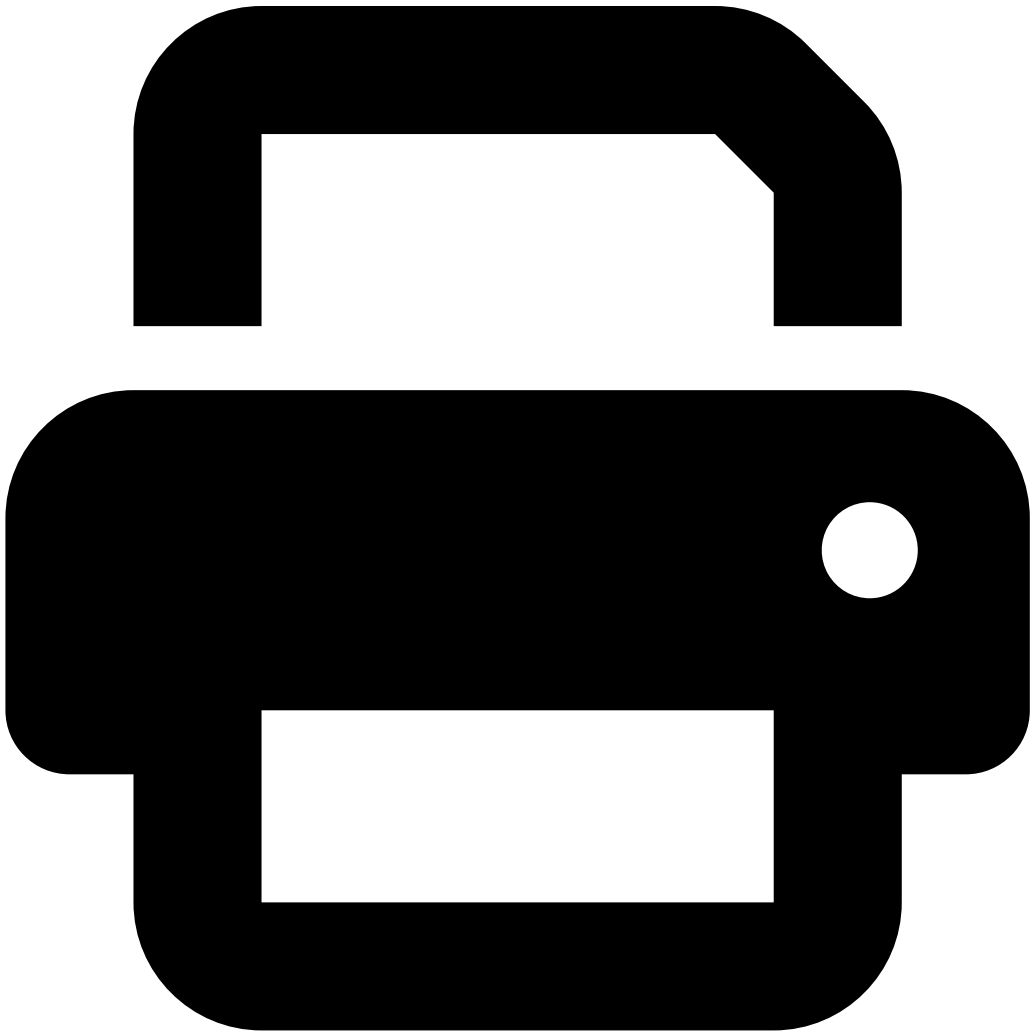

At the restaurant on Tuesday, we served a bruschette trio with five different toppings, and this classic tomato basil version was the clear favorite at the table. It’s one of those recipes that always disappears first—simple, fresh, and full of flavor from just a handful of quality ingredients.

In Italy, bruschetta is all about celebrating what’s in season. When tomatoes are at their peak, there’s nothing better than pairing them with fresh basil, garlic, good olive oil, and toasted rustic bread. It’s rustic, uncomplicated, and proof that the best recipes often come from the simplest ingredients.

This classic Italian bruschetta is perfect as an appetizer, snack, or part of a summer spread when you want something easy but impressive.

Things to know about this Classic Italian Bruschetta Recipe (Easy Tomato Basil Bruschetta)

Tips for the Best Bruschetta

Use Ripe Tomatoes

Fresh, ripe tomatoes are the most important part of this recipe. Roma tomatoes work well because they are flavorful and less watery.

Don’t Skip the Garlic Rub

Rubbing garlic directly onto warm toast gives authentic bruschetta flavor.

Serve Immediately

Bruschetta is best served fresh so the bread stays crisp.

Drain Excess Liquid

If your tomatoes release too much juice, spoon off a little before topping the bread to prevent sogginess.

Variations

While this version stays true to the classic Italian preparation, there are plenty of delicious ways to change it up.

- Add ricotta for a creamy variation

- Top with fresh mozzarella
- Drizzle with balsamic glaze
- Add chopped olives
- Use grilled sourdough bread

What to Serve with Bruschetta

Bruschetta pairs perfectly with:

- Italian pasta salad
- Grilled chicken
- Antipasto platters
- Sicilian potato salad
- Roasted vegetable dishes

It also makes a beautiful addition to summer gatherings and holiday appetizers.

Final Thoughts

Classic bruschetta proves that the simplest recipes are often the most memorable. With fresh tomatoes, good olive oil, basil, and crisp toasted bread, this traditional Italian appetizer is easy to make and full of fresh flavor.

Whether you’re serving it at a summer dinner party or enjoying it as a light snack, bruschetta is one of those timeless Italian recipes that never goes out of style.

If you’re building a full Italian-style spread, this classic bruschetta pairs beautifully with some of my other simple, fresh recipes.

Try serving it alongside my **Italian Pasta Salad** or this comforting **Sicilian Potato Salad** for a complete appetizer table.

For more easy Italian-inspired ideas, browse all my my **Summer Recipes Collection** for more fresh, seasonal dishes.

Classic Italian Bruschetta Recipe (Easy Tomato Basil Bruschetta)



Fresh tomatoes, basil, garlic, and toasted bread come together in this classic Italian bruschetta recipe. An easy summer appetizer ready in minutes.

- 4 medium Roma tomatoes diced
- 1 clove garlic minced
- 1/3 cup basil torn
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- salt and pepper to taste

For the Bread

- 1 baguette or rustic Italian bread, sliced
- olive oil for brushing
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and halved

1. ## Prepare the Tomato Mixture

   Add the diced tomatoes, minced garlic, basil, olive oil,

salt, and black pepper to a bowl.

Gently stir everything together and let the mixture sit for about 10–15 minutes. This allows the tomatoes to release some of their juices and helps the flavors come together.

2. ## Toast the Bread

   Brush both sides of the bread slices lightly with olive oil.

   Place them on a baking sheet and toast in a 400°F oven for about 5–7 minutes, or until golden and crisp. You can also grill the bread for extra flavor.

3. ## Rub the Bread with Garlic

   While the bread is still warm, rub the cut side of the garlic clove over each slice.

   This simple step gives bruschetta its classic flavor without overpowering the tomatoes.

4. ## Assemble the Bruschetta

   Spoon the tomato mixture over the toasted bread just before serving.

   Finish with an extra drizzle of olive oil and a sprinkle of flaky sea salt if desired.

   Serve immediately.

Appetizer
Italian
classic bruschetta recipe, Italian, tomato bruschetta

Easy Sicilian Potato Salad (No Mayo)

Sicilian Potato Salad (no mayo)

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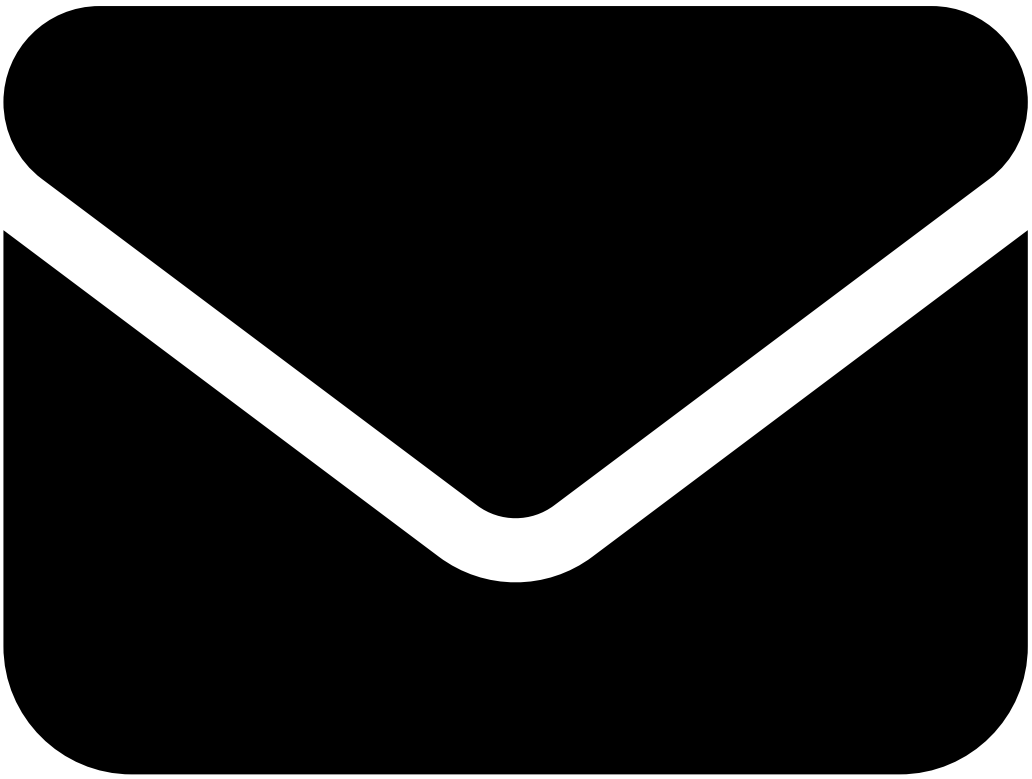




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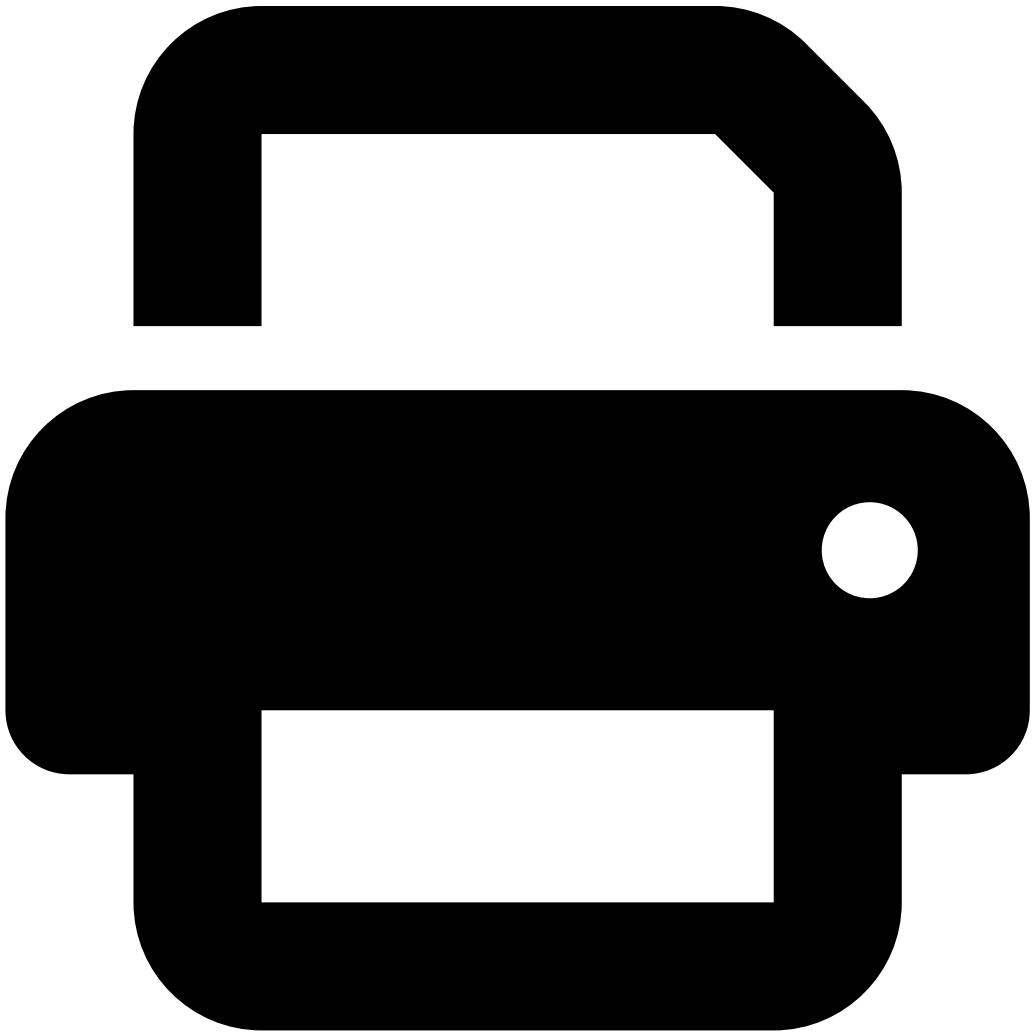

Although I come from Tuscany, Sicilian potato salad was something I grew up eating at so many family gatherings and summer meals. Italian cooking has a beautiful way of traveling from one region to another, and dishes like this become part of family traditions no matter where you're from. This Sicilian potato salad is simple, rustic, and full of Mediterranean flavor – tender potatoes tossed with olive oil, capers, red onion, and fresh herbs instead of heavy mayonnaise. It's the kind of dish that always appeared on warm-weather tables alongside grilled meats, seafood, and plenty of crusty bread.

Unlike the creamy American versions, Sicilian potato salad is bright, rustic, and made for warm weather tables. Tender potatoes are tossed with olive oil, red onion, fresh herbs, capers, and a splash of vinegar for a salad that tastes even better after it sits awhile. It's the kind of dish you'd find at a summer gathering in Southern Italy – simple ingredients,

bold flavor, and no mayonnaise in sight.

This Sicilian potato salad is perfect alongside grilled meats, seafood, or tucked into an antipasto spread. The combination of briny capers, fresh parsley, and oregano gives it that unmistakable Mediterranean flavor while the potatoes soak up every bit of the dressing.

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Things to know about this Easy Sicilian Potato Salad (No Mayo) recipe

Tips for the Best Potato Salad

- Use waxy potatoes like Yukon Golds for the best texture
- Dress the potatoes while warm for maximum flavor
- Let the salad rest before serving
- Use good-quality olive oil – it makes a big difference
- Add olives or anchovies for an even more Sicilian touch

Serving Suggestions

This salad pairs beautifully with grilled chicken, seafood, sausages, or roasted vegetables. It also makes a wonderful addition to an Italian-style picnic table with crusty bread and marinated vegetables.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I make Sicilian potato salad ahead of time?

Yes. In fact, it tastes even better after a few hours in the refrigerator.

Does Sicilian potato salad contain mayonnaise?

Traditionally, no. Sicilian potato salad is olive oil-based with vinegar or lemon juice.

What potatoes work best?

Yukon Gold or red potatoes hold their shape well and have a creamy texture.

Final Thoughts

Sicilian potato salad is proof that the simplest ingredients often make the most memorable dishes. Fresh herbs, olive oil, tangy vinegar, and perfectly cooked potatoes come together in a salad that feels both comforting and refreshing — exactly the kind of food meant to be shared around a summer table.

If you try this Easy Sicilian Potato Salad (No Mayo), let me know how it turns out in the comments! I love seeing your versions.

For more simple Italian sides, check out my
 Roasted Potatoes
 Italian cold Pasta Salad

And if you're building a full meal, this pairs perfectly with my
 Italian Lemon Chicken

Full recipe is on the blog – don’t forget to save it for summer!

Easy Sicilian Potato Salad (No Mayo)



Easy Sicilian Potato Salad (No Mayo) is a light, authentic Italian side dish made with tender potatoes, olive oil, capers, and fresh herbs. Simple, flavorful, and perfect for summer gatherings, this traditional Mediterranean recipe is a fresh twist on classic potato salad.

- 2 lbs. Yukon Gold potatoes, cut into chunks
- 1 cup thinly sliced red onions
- 1/2 cup capers
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes cut in half
- 1 cup pitted kalamata olives (whole or sliced your preference)
- 1/3 cup chopped Italian parsley
- 1/3 cup torn fresh basil
- 1 Tbsp oregano fresh or dried
- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/3 cup red wine vinegar
- salt and pepper to taste

1. Place the potatoes in a large pot and cover with cold salted water. Bring to a boil and cook until fork tender, about 12–15 minutes. Drain well.
2. While the potatoes cook, make the dressing directly in a large serving bowl. Add the olive oil, red wine vinegar, salt, black pepper, basil, capers, sliced red onion, parsley, and oregano. Stir everything together.
3. Add the warm potatoes to the bowl and gently toss until fully coated in the dressing.
4. Let the salad sit for at least 20 minutes before serving so the potatoes absorb all the flavors.

Side Dish
Italian
no mayo potato salad,, pasta, Italian, Salad, Sicilian potato salad, sidedish

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Light & Fresh Italian Recipes for Summer

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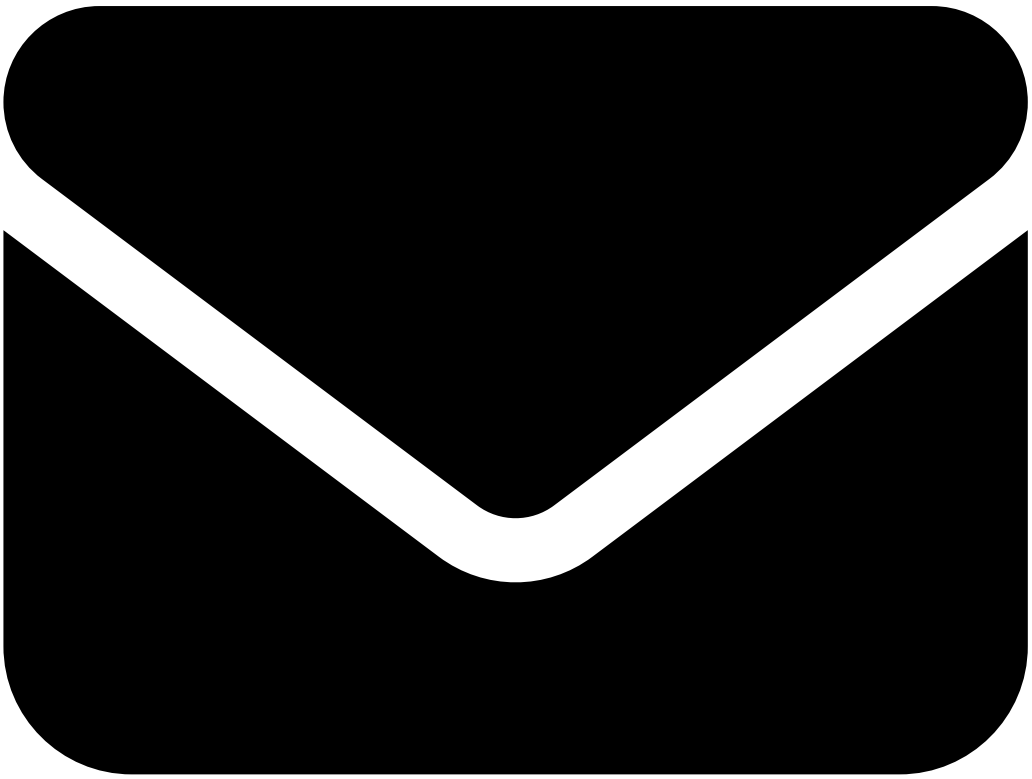




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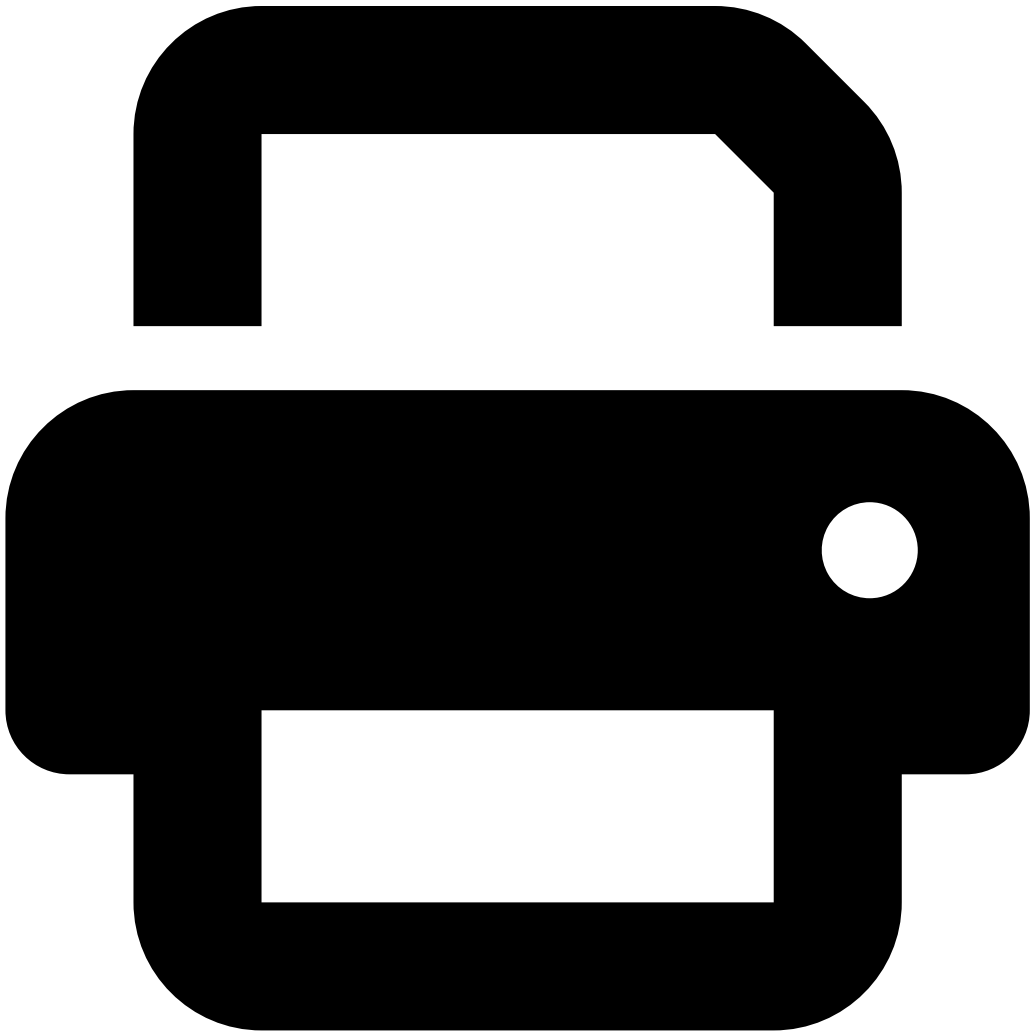

When the weather warms up, the way I cook shifts right along with it. I’m not looking for anything heavy or overcomplicated—I want food that feels fresh, simple, and full of flavor without spending all day in the kitchen.

That’s what Italian cooking does best this time of year. A few good ingredients—olive oil, garlic, lemon, fresh herbs—come together to make something that feels complete without doing too much.

These are the **light Italian recipes for warm weather** that I come back to again and again.

Orzo with Summer vegetables

Some meals just feel easy—especially when they come together

in one pan. This one-pan orzo with summer vegetables is one of those simple, feel-good recipes that checks all the boxes: quick to make, minimal cleanup, and full of fresh summer flavor.GO TO RECIPE

Shrimp Spaghetti with Tomato Basil Sauce

This Shrimp Spaghetti with Tomato Basil Sauce is a simple, fresh pasta dish made with sautéed shrimp, juicy summer tomatoes, garlic, and plenty of fragrant basil. The sauce is created right in the pan by combining the tomato juices with starchy pasta water and a generous handful of grated parmesan, giving you a light flavorful coating that clings to the pasta.GO TO RECIPE

Authentic Pasta al Limone (Italian Lemon Pasta)

Authentic Pasta al Limone made the Italian way—no cream, just lemon, butter, cheese, and pasta water for a silky, bright, and easy lemon pasta recipe.
GO TO RECIPE

Authentic Pasta Portofino

Inspired by the coastal village of Portofino, this dish brings together the bold freshness of basil, the sweetness of ripe tomatoes, and the richness of good olive oil. It’s often described as a cross between a tomato sauce and Pesto alla Genovese—but simpler, looser, and meant to taste like summer.

No cream. No mozzarella. Just real ingredients, handled the right way.

GO TO RECIPE

Tubettini Pasta Salad (Italian pasta fredda)

This authentic Italian tubettini pasta salad is loaded with fresh mozzarella, tomatoes, and savory Italian meats, all tossed in a simple olive oil dressing. The perfect light and flavorful summer pasta fredda for gatherings, picnics, or easy weeknight meals.
GO TO RECIPE

Authentic Italian Stuffed Tomatoes with Rice and Potatoes (Roman Recipe)

Authentic Italian stuffed tomatoes filled with rice, garlic, and basil, roasted with potatoes until tender and flavorful—just like in Rome.
GO TO RECIPE

Best Cod Francese Recipe – in 30 Minutes

A lightly battered, pan-fried cod fillet in an elegant lemon, butter and white wine sauce. It’s similar to chicken piccata—but without the capers and with a velvety, lemon-butter sauce. Ready in less than 30 minutes.GO TO RECIPE

Air fryer salmon Skewer Italian Spiedini

This air fryer salmon skewer Italian spiedini recipe uses simple ingredients you probably already have at home. Salmon is so versatile, it can be cooked in so many different ways. No air fryer? No problem, these salmon spiedini can be baked , grilled or pan-fried. And the best part is they can be on your table in minutes.GO TO RECIPE

Lemon Cod Piccata (Light Italian Seafood Dinner)

Light and flavorful **Cod Lemon Piccata** made with pan-seared

cod, lemon, butter, capers, and white wine. A quick Italian seafood dinner ready in 30 minutes.GO TO RECIPE

Easy chicken piccata

This Easy Chicken Piccata Recipe is so easy and quick, its prefect for family weeknight meals, but fancy enough for weekend dinner with friends.

Melt in your mouth chicken breast in a light creamy, lemony sauce made this recipe a restaurant favorite, I simplified the recipe for the home cook, no worries none of the flavor is lostGO TO RECIPE

Caprese stuffed chicken breast

this caprese stuffed chicken breast with asparagus is a must-try. Juicy chicken breast are packed with the classic flavors of caprese- fresh mozzarella, ripe tomatoes and fragrant basil – along with tender asparagus for a wholesome . satisfying dish that’s easy to make and delicious.GO TO RECIPE

Italian roasted lemon chicken and potato

This Italian roasted lemon chicken dinner is incredibly easy to make because it requires minimal prep, simple ingredients and a hands – free cooking method. The seasoning is as straightforward as mixing olive oil. lemon juice. garlic and herbs, then rubbing it into the chicken. There’s no complicated marinating or advanced techniques- just a few minutes of prep and the oven does the rest.GO TO RECIPE

Air fryer Chicken spiedini

Air fryer parmesan chicken spiedini are Italy’s version of skewers or kabobs. In this spiedini recipe boneless, skinless chicken thighs are marinated in a blend of Italian spices, cooked in the air fryer, and basted with a delicious garlic, parmesan butter sauce.GO TO RECIPE

Easy Italian Vinaigrette Recipe (Better Than Store-Bought)

Homemade Italian vinaigrette made with simple pantry ingredients. Fresh, budget-friendly, and better than store-bought—ready in minutes.

GO TO RECIPE

Watermelon Cucumber Feta Salad

When the weather warms up and watermelon starts showing up in every market bin, I can’t help but crave this bright and refreshing salad. This **Watermelon Cucumber, feta salad with and Lemon-Honey Dressing** is one of my go-to dishes during the warmer months. It’s light, vibrant, and incredibly refreshing—with just the right balance of sweet, salty, and tangy.
GO TO RECIPE

If you’re looking for easy summer meals that don’t feel heavy, this is a great place to start. Mix a light pasta with a fresh salad or something grilled, and you have a complete meal without overthinking it.

You can find all the full recipes linked above, along with more Italian-inspired dishes on the blog to keep your summer cooking simple and full of flavor.

Tubettini Pasta Salad (Italian pasta fredda)

Tubettini Pasta Salad (Italian pasta fredda)

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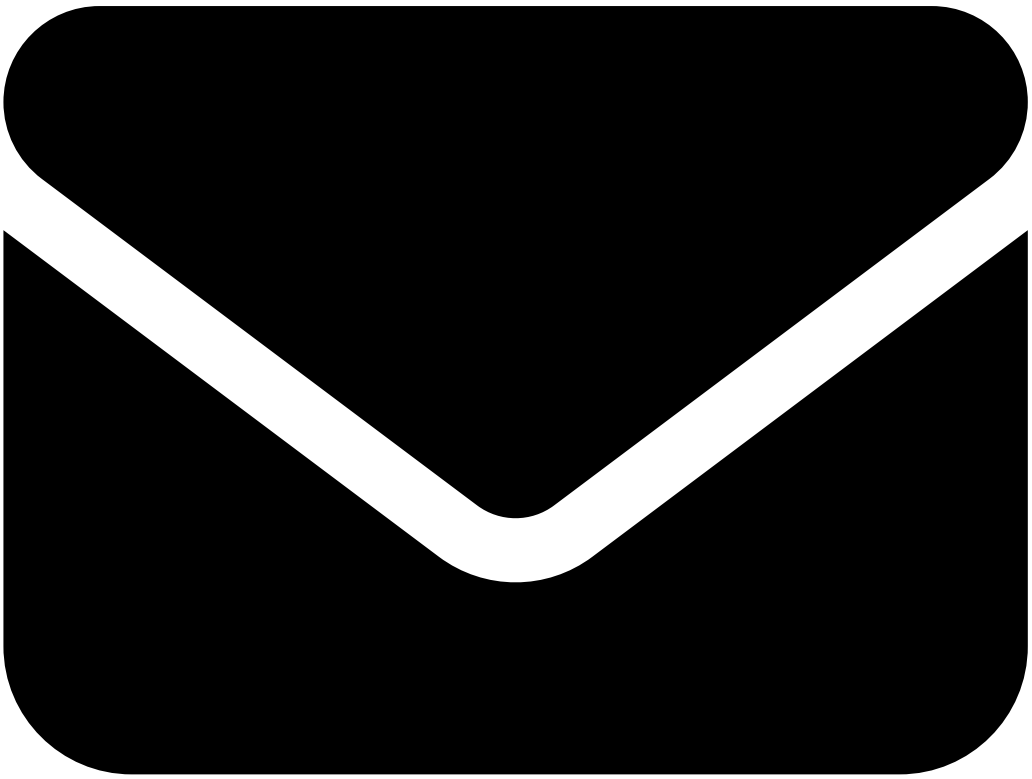




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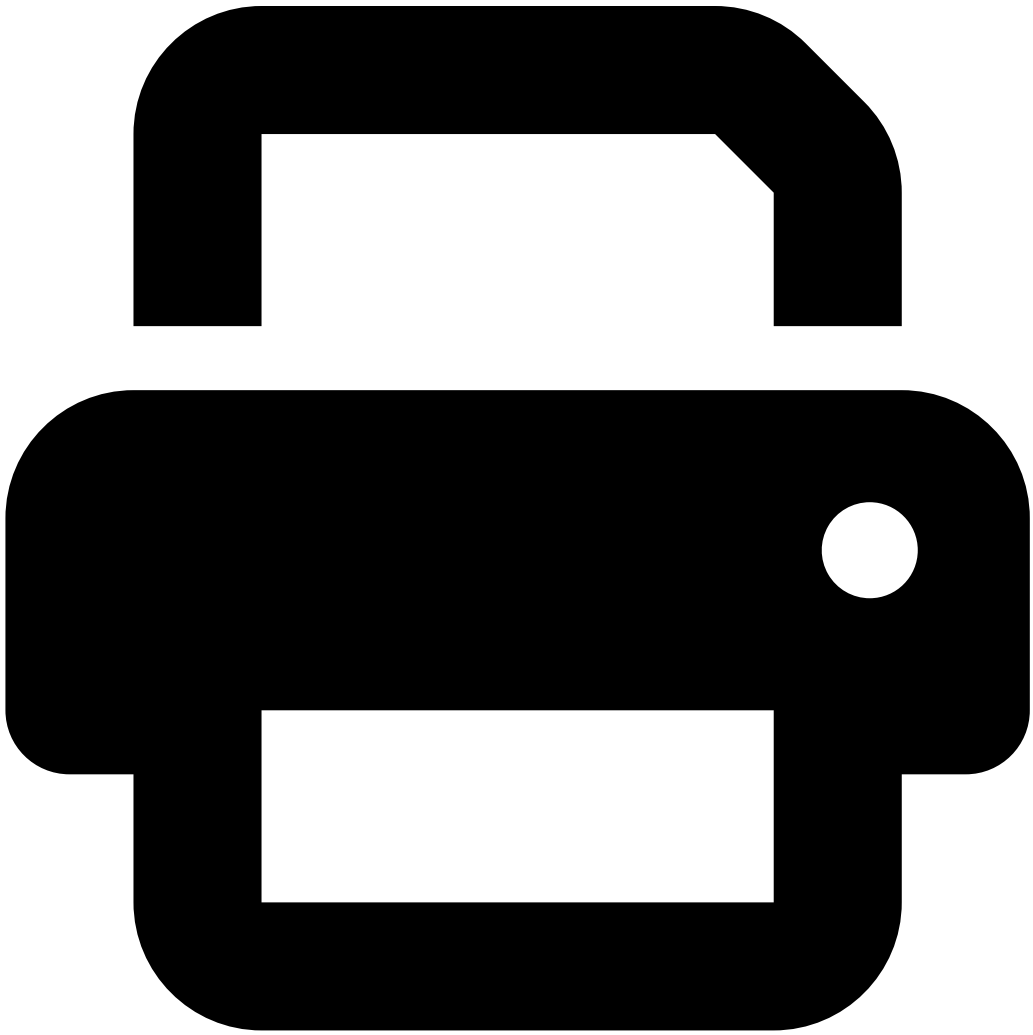

This is the kind of pasta salad I always come back to once the weather warms up—simple, fresh, and made with whatever I have in the fridge. I like using tubettini because it catches all the little bits of salumi, cheese, and dressing in every bite, and it reminds me of the easy summer meals we'd throw together without overthinking it. It's the kind of dish that gets better as it sits, perfect for making ahead and putting out for a relaxed lunch or casual get-together.

Things to know about this Tubettini Pasta Salad (Italian pasta fredda)

- The meats are **cut small**, about the size of the

pasta—nothing chunky
- It's **olive oil based**, never creamy
- It should feel **balanced, not heavy or overloaded**
- Served at **room temp or slightly chilled**, not ice cold
- This is the kind of dish you'd see packed for a beach day or put out for a casual summer lunch. It's flexible—everyone kind of makes their own version based on what they have.

Optional Add-Ins

- Cubed provolone for a sharper bite
- Marinated artichokes
- Roasted red peppers
- A handful of arugula right before serving

Storage

Store any leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Before serving, let it sit at room temperature for about 15–20 minutes and give it a quick toss with a drizzle of olive oil to refresh the flavors, as the pasta will absorb some of the dressing.

If you love simple, authentic Italian summer recipes like this, you'll want to try a few more of my favorites. Check out my Italian lemon **pasta al limone**, **or** classic **Italian pasta Portofino** on the blog for more fresh, seasonal inspiration. And if you make this Tubettini Pasta Salad (Italian pasta fredda) please leave me a comment I love hearing from you . It's my favorite part!!!!

Tubettini Pasta Salad (Italian

Pasta Fredda)



This authentic Italian tubettini pasta salad is loaded with fresh mozzarella, tomatoes, and savory Italian meats, all tossed in a simple olive oil dressing. The perfect light and flavorful summer pasta fredda for gatherings, picnics, or easy weeknight meals.

- 12 oz, Tubettini (You can use any small shaped pasta)
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes (cut in half)
- 1 cup fresh mozzarella (cubed or pearls)
- 1 cup each mixed Italian meats, diced: (salami mortadella prosciutto)
- 1/2 cup pitted kalamata olives
- 1/2 cup chopped red onion
- 1/2 cup torn fresh basil leaves

EASY Italian vinaigrette

- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/3 cup red wine vinegar
- 1 Tsp lemon juice
- 1 clove minced garlic
- 1 Tbsp. dried oregano
- 1 Tbsp. dried basil
- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 Tsp. honey
- salt and pepper to taste

1. Cook the tubettini in salted water until al dente.

2. Drain and spread it out so it cools completely.
3. In a large bowl, combine tomatoes, mozzarella, meats, olives, and onion.
4. Add the cooled pasta.
5. Toss with the Italian vinaigrette
6. Fold in basil at the end.
7. Let it sit about 30 minutes before serving.

Instructions for the Vinaigrette

1. Add all of the ingredients to a glass jar with a lid shake variously until dressing is emulsified

Main Course, Salad, Side Dish
Italian
pasta, Italian, Salad

Authentic Italian Stuffed Tomatoes with Rice and Potatoes (Roman Recipe)

Authentic Italian Stuffed

Tomatoes with Rice and Potatoes (Roman Recipe)

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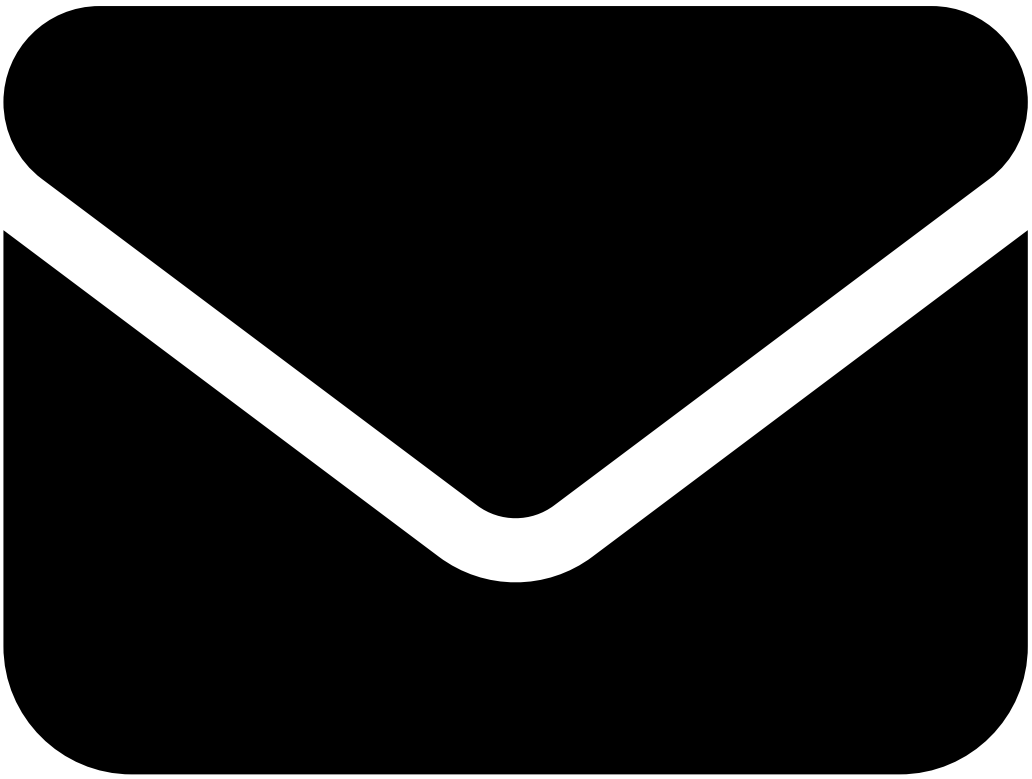




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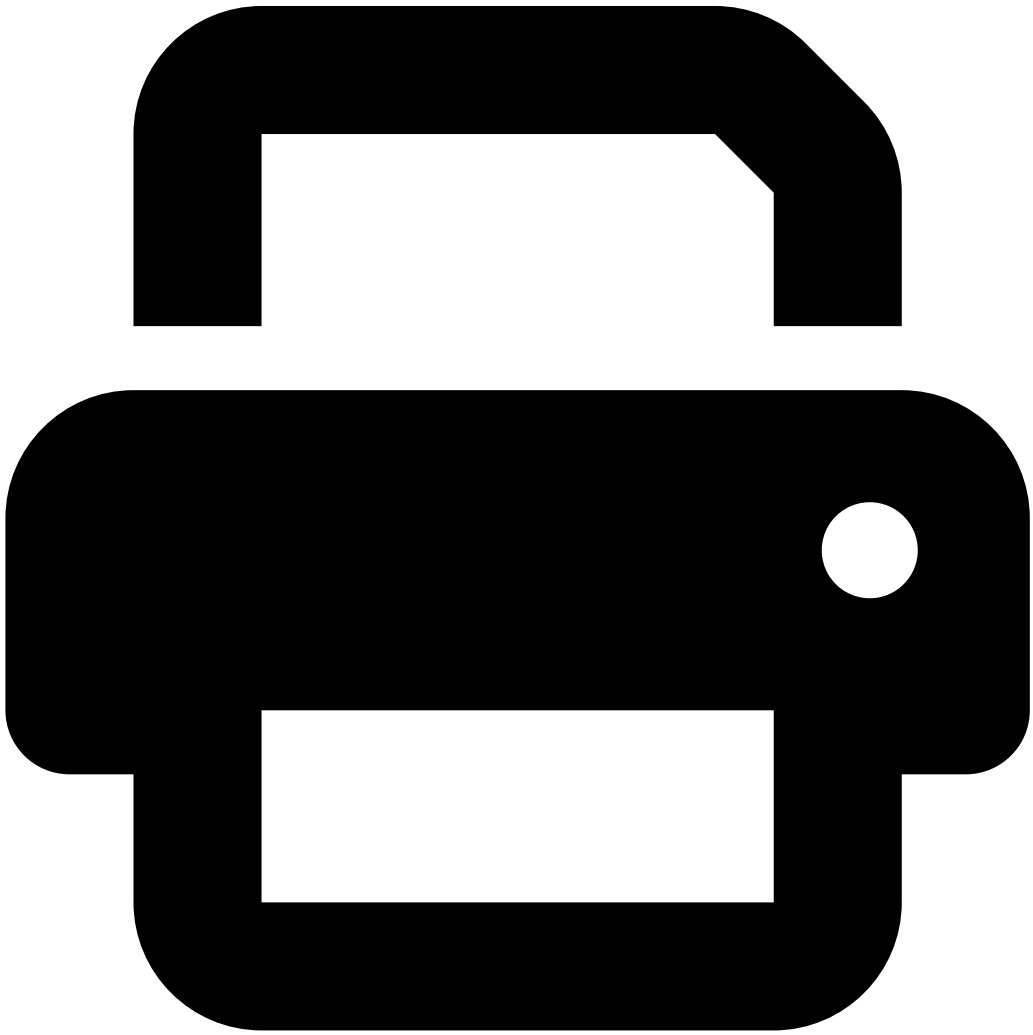

This dish goes back to **Roman home cooking**, where simplicity wasn’t a trend—it was survival and tradition. *Pomodori Ripieni di Riso* (stuffed tomatoes with rice) became especially popular in and around Rome and Lazio as a way to stretch seasonal summer produce into a full, satisfying meal.

Farmers and home cooks would hollow out ripe tomatoes at peak season, using every bit of the fruit—juice, pulp, and all—to season uncooked rice. As it baked slowly in the oven, the rice absorbed the tomato’s natural sweetness while olive oil, garlic, and basil built layers of flavor. Nothing was wasted, and nothing was complicated.

The addition of potatoes baked underneath is a classic Roman touch. They act almost like a built-in side dish, soaking up the tomato juices as everything roasts together into one unified pan.

What you get is a dish that feels humble but deeply intentional—rooted in old-world Italian cooking where seasonal ingredients and patience did all the work.

Things to know about this Authentic Italian Stuffed Tomatoes with Rice and Potatoes (Roman Recipe)

What to Look For

- Rice fully cooked and fluffy inside
- Tomatoes slightly wrinkled and jammy
- Potatoes deeply golden and infused with tomato juices

How to Serve

- Best at **room temperature** (this is very Italian)
- Drizzle with a little fresh olive oil before serving
- Spoon those potatoes right alongside—don’t leave them behind

Pro Tips

- Don’t skip the resting time for the rice
- Use ripe but sturdy tomatoes so they hold their shape
- If the pan looks dry halfway through, add a splash of water or more olive oil
- Let them sit 10–15 minutes before serving so everything settles

Storage

- **Fridge: up to 3 days**

- **Reheat gently or enjoy cold/room temp**

- **Flavor actually gets better the next day**

- If you loved these authentic Roman stuffed tomatoes, you'll want to explore more simple Italian dishes that let seasonal ingredients shine.
    - My **Authentic Tomato Bolognese Sauce** for another classic, slow-simmered staple
    - **Italian Roasted Potatoes** for the perfect crispy side dish
    - **Caponata (Sicilian Eggplant Relish)** if you love bold Mediterranean flavors
    - **Lemon Loaf** cake for something bright and sweet to finish

  If you make this recipe, leave a comment and let me know how it turned out—or tag me so I can see your version straight from the oven

Authentic Italian Stuffed Tomatoes with Rice and Potatoes (Roman Recipe)



Authentic Italian stuffed tomatoes filled with rice, garlic, and basil, roasted with potatoes until tender and flavorful—just like in Rome.

- 6 medium tomatoes (firm)
- 1 cup uncooked short grain rice (Arborio)
- 2 cloves garlic (minced)
- 1/3 cup basil (torn)
- 3 Tbsp olive oil
- 2-3 medium potatoes (cut into medium dice)
- salt and pepper to taste

1. ## Prep the Tomatoes

   Cut the tops off and set aside. Scoop out the pulp and juices into a bowl.Salt the inside of each tomato and place them upside down for about 20 minutes to drain.

2. ## Make the Rice Filling

   Crush or blend the tomato pulp until slightly smooth. Add:

   Mix and let it sit for **at least 15 minutes**. This step is key—the rice absorbs all that tomato flavor before baking

3. ## Prep the Potatoes

   Slice the potatoes thin or into medium dice Toss with:

   Spread them in the bottom of your baking dish.

4. ## Stuff & Assemble

   Fill the tomatoes with the rice mixture (don’t pack tightly).Place them directly on top of the potatoes .Add

the tomato tops back on and drizzle everything with a little more olive oil.

5. ## Roast

   Bake at **375°F (190°C)** for **50–60 minutes**, until:

   the rice is tender the tomatoes are soft and slightly caramelizedthe potatoes are golden and crispy on the edges

Main Course
Italian
authentic Italian stuffed tomatoes with rice and potatoes”