

Salade Nicoise

(Nicoise Salad) - serves 12

INGREDIENTS

30 ounces assorted pre-washed greens
3 cloves of garlic, peeled, minced and crushed to a paste with the side of a chef's knife
6 tbsp good quality wine vinegar
3 pinches of salt
1-1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
3 waxy potatoes, gently simmered in their skins till easily penetrated with a paring knife (about 20 minutes)
1-1/2 lbs green beans (preferably haricots verts) with the ends removed
9 large eggs, hard cooked
3 red or yellow bell peppers, seeded and cut into rings
6 medium sized tomatoes
18 anchovies
18 ounces tuna in oil
1 cup Nicoise olives

METHOD

1. Cook the potatoes (as above). Boil the green beans in a large pot of salted water 5-8 minutes until there is just the slightest crunch when you bite into one; drain in a colander and immediately rinse with cold water. Peel and slice the eggs into 4 wedges. Peel the tomatoes (dip in boiling water for 30 seconds, rinse in cold water), peel away the skin with a paring knife, cut out the stem end, and cut each tomato into 8 wedges; push the seeds out of each wedge with your fingertip. Pat the beans dry or use a salad spinner.
2. In a small mixing bowl, stir together the garlic, vinegar and salt and mix in the olive oil without beating, to form a vinaigrette. Drain the potatoes and peel the skin off while the potatoes are still warm. Slice the potatoes thick and stir the slices gently in another bowl with 9 tbsp of the vinaigrette.
3. Drain the anchovies and cut in half crosswise. Break the tuna into chunks, but don't shred it.
4. Place the lettuce in a large bowl and toss with the remaining vinaigrette.
5. Place the salad on individual plates. Then arrange all the other ingredients decoratively on each plate. (Be sure to warn your guests about the possibility of pits in the olives.)