

TOMATO SALAD

A summer classic. More method than recipe.
The starting point of a complex salad, or the star
of the show.

INGREDIENTS

For the tomatoes

- ▶▶ Tomatoes
- ▶▶ Salt
- ▶▶ For the dressing
- ▶▶ Olive oil
- ▶▶ Pepper

Companions

- ▶▶ Mozzarella
- ▶▶ Peaches
- ▶▶ Red onion
- ▶▶ Black olives

METHOD

- ▶▶ Use about one golf ball size tomato, or a handful of smaller ones, per person when making this salad as part of a spread. When eating it as a stand alone dish, perhaps with some cheese, increase that amount to maybe two.
- ▶▶ For me eating food is what it looks like as much as its taste, so I like to cut the tomatoes asymmetrically, removing any tough stalks as I go.
- ▶▶ As the tomatoes are cut, place them in a colander standing in a bowl. When done, add salt. What seems like an alarming amount. The salt being added will not be eaten in the final dish. Its job is to draw out the liquid in the tomatoes, which along with the excess salt, will run out of the colander, leaving sweet tomatoey tomatoes.
- ▶▶ Something like half a teaspoon per tomato is about right. With your hands, toss the tomatoes coated in salt and agitate the colander to encourage the juices to drain out. When no more liquid is running out the tomatoes, transfer them to a serving bowl.
- ▶▶ So that the tomatoes sing in this dish, simply use extra virgin olive oil and freshly ground black pepper to dress them. A scant amount of balsamic or red wine vinegar, even for a more exotic slant, pomegranate molasses. The true essence of this dish though is the tomatoes.
- ▶▶ To make the dish more substantial, mozzarella is the perfect choice. Creamy feta is another option. And peaches work well. Thinly sliced onions, olives, blanched green beans and wedges of beetroot would add extra interest too.