



The Mediterranean countries are all olive-oil producers, and each country, even each region within a country, has its own style of oil. Oils from Greece tend to be rich yet mellow. Tuscan oils are distinctly peppery, while Sicilian oils are “big” and earthy. Olive oils from the south coast of France are buttery. Whenever possible, choose oils that match the style of a dish, with lighter, milder oils for delicate salads, vegetables or fish. More robust olive oils pair well with sturdier vegetables, anchovies, garlic, dark greens and red meats.

Ingredients:

2 red bell peppers
1 green bell pepper
2 cups cherry tomatoes
2 cucumbers
2 red onions
1/2 lb. feta cheese
1 garlic clove
3/4 cup Kalamata olives
6 anchovy fillets (optional)
2 Tbs. capers, rinsed
1/4 cup red wine vinegar
2 Tbs. minced fresh dill
1 tsp. dried oregano
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. freshly ground pepper
1/3 cup fruity extra-virgin olive oil

Directions:

Seed the bell peppers and cut them into 1-inch chunks. Stem the cherry tomatoes and halve one-half of them, leaving the others whole. Peel and thickly slice the cucumbers, and thinly slice the red onions. Cut the feta cheese into 1-inch cubes. Crush and mince the garlic clove.

In a large bowl, combine the bell peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, feta cheese, olives, anchovies and capers and toss together.

In a small bowl, whisk together the vinegar, garlic, dill, oregano, salt and pepper. While whisking, slowly drizzle in the olive oil to make a thick dressing. Pour the dressing over the salad, toss and serve immediately. Serves 8.



Variation Tips:

For a more formal presentation, arrange the bell peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, feta cheese, olives and anchovies on a platter. Sprinkle the capers over all the ingredients and pour the dressing over the top. Or, try sliced large tomatoes instead of cherry tomatoes. Line the platter with lettuce leaves or young spinach leaves to make a bed for the other ingredients.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Collection Series, Salad, by Georgeanne Brennan (Simon & Schuster, 2001).