

Nonna Anita's Tuna-stuffed Summer Tomatoes

The late summer months in Italy are when Italian cooks feverishly start canning their homegrown tomatoes while preparing fresh tomato-based recipes that their families wait all year to enjoy. Just like with grapes, the sun's magic produces a succulent sweetness in tomatoes that reaches its peak in September.



So, there are tomatoes on the table at lunch and at dinner every day until the family's garden supply is exhausted. This is my mother-in-law's recipe that she served for lunch on sweltering hot days. The tuna composition is not so unusual (except for the addition of capers perhaps) but it is the explosion in the mouth of summer fragrances and tastes embodied in the tomato that makes this a staple recipe in our household at this time of year. Serves 2.

Ingredients

2 - 12 oz. beefsteak tomatoes
7-oz. can light tuna in olive oil, thoroughly drained
1 (scant) tablespoon capers, drained and rinsed well
1 small stalk celery, with leaves, thinly sliced & diced (approx. ½ cup)
3 large sprigs flat parsley, minced (approx. 1 tbsp.)
4 large basil leaves, hand ripped into small pieces (approx. 2 tbsp.)
¼ cup light mayonnaise
juice of 1 lemon (approx. 2 tbsp.)
salt/pepper, optional

Directions

1. Wash the tomatoes and, using a sharp knife, cut off the tops. With the knife and a teaspoon, loosen and scoop out the tomato pulp and seeds, creating a large hollow center. Sprinkle lightly the insides of the tomatoes with salt, turn upside down and set aside on a cutting board. On the same board, chop the tomato pulp.
2. In a medium sized bowl, add the tomato pulp, the tuna, capers, celery, parsley and basil. Mix all ingredients well, making sure to break up the tuna chunks into small pieces.
3. Add the mayonnaise and the lemon juice and mix well. Add salt & pepper to taste.
4. Fill the tomato cavities with the tuna mixture and refrigerate for one hour before serving.

Nutritional Information

Calories: 334
Carbohydrates: 21 g
Protein: 25 g
Fat: 17 g
Saturated Fat: 3 g
Cholesterol: 16 mg
Fiber: 4 g

GI Value: 0 - low