



Cucumber and Zucchini Panzanella

2 large English cucumbers, peeled, halved lengthwise, and cut into 1/4-inch half-rounds

2 medium zucchini, sliced as thinly as possible, preferably on a mandoline

1 medium red onion, halved and sliced paper-thin

1 cup extra virgin olive oil

1/2 cup red wine vinegar

20 fresh basil leaves, torn

Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1 pound day-old crusty peasant-style whole-grain bread, cut into 1-inch cubes (about 6 cups)

Preheat the oven to 400°F.

Combine the cucumbers, zucchini, and onions in a large salad bowl. Add the oil, vinegar, and half of the basil.

Season with salt and pepper, and allow to stand at room temperature.

Place the bread cubes on a cookie sheet and bake in the oven for 8 minutes, until warm and toasted but not hard.

Remove the cookie sheet from the oven, and toss the toasted bread cubes into the bowl of vegetables. Add the remaining basil, stir gently to mix, and allow to stand for 5 minutes before serving.

SERVES 8 TO 10 AS A SIDE DISH