



Spring panzanella

Take all the green you can find and put it on a plate. That's what this dish is – a celebration of the spring greenery: asparagus, broad beans, peas and herbs. So many herbs. Use what herbs you have to hand but wild garlic is a must and mint is a definite no-no (won't go with the garlic) but tarragon, parsley, chervil, sorrel, fennel and basil would all work. And do allow time for this dish to sit before serving. The croutons absorb the dressing, the greens soak in the peppery olive oil and everything gets friendly in a way that can only result in deliciousness.

Serves 2
30 minutes

Bunch of asparagus (about 250g)

100g broad beans (podded weight, or frozen)

100g peas (ditto)

75g sugar snaps or mangetout

1 tbsp baby capers

10-12 caperberries

For the dressing:

3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

1 tbsp apple balsamic vinegar (I use [Odysea](#) but another sweet, non-syrupy vinegar would work)

½ tsp Dijon mustard

Small bunch of wild garlic, parsley and tarragon, finely chopped to make roughly 3tbsp-worth

3 spring onions, finely chopped

For the croutons:

150g sourdough bread

2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

Start with the croutons. Tear the bread into rough, bite-sized pieces. Drizzle with extra virgin olive oil, sprinkle liberally with salt, then toss, making sure each piece is evenly coated. Arrange the croutons in a single layer on a baking tray and roast for 7–10 minutes, turning over halfway through, until the bread is crisp and golden. Remove from the oven and set aside (far away from where you are cooking, or you'll eat them before you finish the salad.)

Next, cook the veg. Get a large bowl of cold water ready to receive the blanched veg and add a few ice cubes for good measure (this will stop everything over cooking but also helps to retain the bright green colour. No one likes a dull Kermit-coloured salad.)

Trim the woody trunks from the base of the asparagus then slice any fat spears in half lengthways.

Boil a big pan of salted water and add the asparagus into the rolling boil along with the broad beans. Bubble for 1 minute then add the peas and sugar snaps for another minute. No longer. You want crunch. Drain everything, then tip the veg into the iced water to cool.

For the dressing, put the extra virgin olive oil, vinegar and Dijon into a jam jar with a pinch of salt and a tablespoon of hot water. Screw the lid on and shake vigorously until emulsified. Add the chopped herbs and spring onions.

Drain the greens and pat them dry with a little kitchen roll then put them in a serving bowl. Add the croutons, capers and caperberries and the dressing. Toss everything together with your hands then set aside for at least 15 minutes so the flavours can mingle and the bread soaks up the dressing. Serve *al fresco* with a glass of chilled white wine (and possibly a cardigan).