

## Robust Italian Salad & Seasoned Croutons

- 1 pkg (16 oz) ready-to-serve salad
- 1 pkg (2 1/2 oz) sliced pastrami, cut into 1/2" pieces, optional
- 1 cup (4 oz) shredded mozzarella cheese
- 4 plum tomatoes, chopped
- 1 tsp. Italian seasoning
- 1/3 cup Italian salad dressing
- 1 cup Seasoned Croutons (recipe below)
- Sliced ripe olives, optional



In a large salad bowl, combine the first 5 ingredients. Drizzle with dressing; toss to coat. Top with croutons and olives if desired. **Garnish with tomato roses and parsley.**

**Seasoned Croutons** (the kind that don't shoot across the table when you poke them with your fork)

- |                                |                               |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2 Tbsp. butter                 | 1/4 tsp. dried oregano        |
| 1 Tbsp. olive or vegetable oil | 1/4 tsp. dried basil          |
| 1/4 tsp. garlic powder         | Pinch of salt                 |
| 1/4 tsp. onion powder          | 6 slices day-old bread, cubed |

In an ungreased pan, combine the first 7 ingredients. Place in a 300-degree oven until butter is melted. Remove from the oven; stir to combine. Add bread cubes and toss to coat. Bake for 10 - 15 min or until lightly browned, stirring frequently. Cool. Store in refrigerator in airtight container. Yield: 3 cups.

**These are not only great with salad, but we also use them in soup.**

*Recipe from the 2001 Quick Cooking annual cookbook*

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