Panzanella With Mozzarella and Herbs

[**MELISSA CLARK**](https://cooking.nytimes.com/42927554-melissa-clark/my-recipes)

* **YIELD**6 servings

* **4** **ounces ciabatta or baguette, preferably stale, cut into 1-inch cubes (about 3 cups)**
* **6** **tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, more to taste**
* **¾** **teaspoon kosher sea salt, more to taste**
* **2** **pounds very ripe tomatoes, preferably a mix of varieties and colors**
* **6** **ounces fresh mozzarella, torn or cut into bite-size pieces**
* **½** **cup thinly sliced red onion, about half a small onion**
* **2** **garlic cloves, grated to a paste**
* **2** **tablespoons red wine vinegar, more to taste**
* **1** **tablespoon chopped fresh oreganoor thyme (or a combination)**
* **Large pinch red pepper flakes(optional)**
* **½** **teaspoon Dijon mustard**
* **Black pepper, to taste**
* **½** **cup thinly sliced Persian or Kirby cucumber, about 1 small cucumber**
* **½** **cup torn basil leaves**
* **¼** **cup flat-leaf parsley leaves, roughly chopped**
* **1** **tablespoon capers, drained**

1. Heat oven to 425 degrees. Spread the bread cubes on a rimmed baking sheet and toss with 2 tablespoons oil and a pinch of salt. Bake until they are dried out and pale golden brown at the edges, about 7 to 15 minutes. Let cool on a wire rack.
2. Cut tomatoes into bite-size pieces and transfer to a large bowl. Add mozzarella, onions, garlic paste, 1 tablespoon vinegar, oregano or thyme, 1/4 teaspoon salt and the red pepper flakes if using. Toss to coat and set aside.
3. In a medium bowl, combine remaining 1 tablespoon vinegar, the mustard, 1/4 teaspoon salt and some black pepper to taste. While whisking constantly, slowly drizzle in the remaining 4 tablespoons olive oil until the mixture is thickened. Stir in cucumbers, basil and parsley.
4. Add bread cubes, cucumber mixture and capers to the tomatoes and toss well. Let sit for at least 30 minutes and up to 4 hours before serving. Toss with a little more olive oil, vinegar and salt if needed just before serving.