

TUNA SALAD SALAD

Serves 2

In the same way I do not want to explore the pizza with the “creative toppings,” (give me A Margarita), I am not interested in a “twist” on a tuna salad, as it falls under a style of food I like to ask to “Please Just Play The Hits,” (see also: grilled cheese, ice cream, caesar salad). The classic cravings are specific and the failure to deliver in the name of “putting a spin on it” is a soul crushing disappointment every time.

The tuna itself can be packed in oil or spring water, purchased in Italy or the Key Foods, come in a tin can or glass jar, I do not care. What I do care about: Does it have the proper amount of mayonnaise (“just enough”)? Is the tuna properly mashed into just the right texture (not too chunky, never mushy)? Is it bright with acidity and oniony with...onions? Have you included celery and perhaps, “too much” dill? Is there iceberg lettuce involved, in any way? If the answer is no to any of those questions, I do not want that tuna salad. This tuna salad, however, says YES, unequivocally, to all of those questions.

- 1. ½ small red onion or 1 large shallot**
- 2. 1 lemon, zested and halved**
- 3. Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 4. 1 celery stalk, finely chopped**
- 5. ¼ cup fresh dill leaves, coarsely chopped, divided**
- 6. 2–3 tablespoons mayonnaise, plus more for the toast, if you like**
- 7. 1 5–7 oz. can or jar tuna packed in oil or spring water, drained**
- 8. 1/2 head iceberg or romaine lettuce, leaves separated**
- 9. 2 tablespoons capers, roughly chopped, optional**
- 10. 2 slices rye bread, well toasted**
- 11. Softened butter, for the toast (unless you prefer mayo)**

Finely chop half the onion (or shallot), thinly slice the remaining and set aside (you can also finely chop the whole thing if eating onions “two ways” does not interest you the way it interests me).

Combine the finely chopped onion in a medium bowl with lemon zest and the juice from about ½ a lemon, season with salt and pepper. Let sit 5 minutes or so, to kind of lightly pickle and macerate (this is doing two things: mellowing out the raw onion, and flavoring the lemon juice so that it can better dress the entire mixture).

Add the celery, half of the dill and the mayo. Mix well, like you’re making a dressing (you’re making a dressing!). Add the tuna to that and using a fork, mix until it resembles the tuna salad you want to see in the world (the end texture can be smooth and pate-like, or chunky and dressed, and that is really personal preference).

Scatter the lettuce and remaining sliced onion onto a large plate and squeeze the other half of the lemon over and season with salt and pepper. Spoon the tuna salad in and on the lettuce, like you’re creating a little edible arrangement. Scatter with capers, thinly sliced onion and remaining dill.

Cut the toast into triangles (tastes better) and spread with a bit of softened butter or mayonnaise, or both if you’re truly “going for it.”

Eat like lettuce cups, or like a salad, or like open faced toast.