

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 0 minutes

Total time: 15 minutes

Intensity level: Very Easy (No cooking required, minimal knife skills)

Yield: 4 servings

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INTRODUCTION

A true Classic Greek Salad—known in Greece as *Horiatiki* (meaning “village salad”)—is the ultimate celebration of ripe, simple, sun-drenched Mediterranean ingredients. Unlike westernized versions that rely heavily on heaps of chopped romaine, sugary dressings, or processed croutons, authentic Greek salad relies on a few fundamental rules: no leafy greens, large-cut crisp vegetables, briny Greek olives, thick block-cut feta, and a minimal dressing made of pure extra virgin olive oil and red wine vinegar.

When vegetables are at peak season in the heat of summer, this dish moves beyond a basic side dish to become a stunning center-piece. It provides a perfect balance of textures—crisp cucumbers, juicy tomatoes, sharp red onions, creamy feta, and snappy bell peppers—brought together by the peppery bite of raw olive oil and dried oregano. Whether served alongside grilled lamb, roasted chicken, or enjoyed on its own with a thick slab of crusty sourdough or pita, this recipe captures the authentic rustic spirit of a seaside taverna in every bite.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

- Large shallow serving bowl or platter
- Sharp chef’s knife
- Cutting board
- Measuring spoons and liquid measuring cup
- Small whisk or fork (for dressing)

INGREDIENTS

For the Salad Base:

- 4 ripe medium vine-ripened tomatoes (or 3 large heirloom/beefsteak tomatoes), cut into bite-sized wedges
- 1 medium English cucumber (or 3 small Persian cucumbers), partially peeled in strips, sliced into thick half-moons
- 1 small red onion, thinly sliced into half-rings
- 1 medium green bell pepper, cored, seeded, and sliced into medium-thick rings or strips
- ½ cup (about 70g) authentic Kalamata olives, pitted or whole (traditional preferred)
- 7 oz (200g) high-quality Greek feta cheese, served in one or two solid whole blocks (not crumbled)

For the Authentic Dressing & Garnish:

- ¼ cup (60ml) premium extra virgin olive oil (preferably cold-pressed Greek oil)
- 1 ½ tablespoons red wine vinegar

- 1 teaspoon dried oregano (wild Greek oregano preferred), crushed between your palms
- ½ teaspoon fine sea salt (adjust to taste depending on the saltiness of the feta)
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon fresh capers (optional, rinsed and drained)

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1: Prep the Tomatoes

Wash and dry the tomatoes thoroughly. Core the tomatoes and slice them into rugged, medium-sized wedges. Avoid cutting them too small, as large wedges hold their juice better without turning soggy. Place the chopped tomatoes directly into your shallow serving bowl.

Step 2: Prepare the Cucumbers & Peppers

Peel the English cucumber in alternating strips using a vegetable peeler to leave a striped green-and-white pattern (this adds visual appeal and leaves just enough skin for texture). Slice the cucumber down the middle lengthwise, then cut into thick, ¼-inch half-moons. Slice the green bell pepper into sturdy rings or thick strips. Add both to the bowl with the tomatoes.

Step 3: Slice the Red Onion

Slice the red onion thinly into translucent half-moons. If you prefer a milder onion flavor, soak the sliced onions in a small bowl of ice water for 5 minutes, then drain and pat dry. Scatter the red onion slices over the tomatoes, cucumbers, and peppers.

Step 4: Add the Olives and Capers

Scatter the Kalamata olives and capers (if using) over the vegetable mixture. Gently toss the vegetables together using your hands or salad tongs just enough to distribute them evenly—do not over-mix, as the tomatoes should remain intact.

Step 5: Whisk the Dressing

In a small glass jar or measuring cup, combine the extra virgin olive oil, red wine vinegar, fine sea salt, and half of the dried oregano. Whisk vigorously until the mixture is lightly emulsified.

Step 6: Assemble and Dress

Pour the dressing evenly over the tossed salad. Place the slab (or two blocks) of feta cheese directly on top of the vegetables in the center of the dish.

Step 7: Final Garnish and Serve

Drizzle a small splash of additional extra virgin olive oil over the top of the feta slab. Sprinkle the remaining crushed dried oregano and a dash of freshly ground black pepper over the feta and vegetables. Serve immediately alongside fresh warm bread to soak up the juices at the bottom of the bowl.

PRO TIPS FOR SUCCESS

1. **Never Crumble the Feta:** Authentic Greek tavernas always place a solid slab of feta right on top of the salad. Crumbles absorb too much liquid and turn mushy. Diners break off pieces of the feta with their forks as they eat.
2. **Temperature Matters:** Serve tomatoes at room temperature. Cold tomatoes straight

from the refrigerator lose much of their natural sweetness and aromatic flavor compounds.

3. Embrace the “Ladolemono” Juices: The combination of olive oil, vinegar, and natural tomato juices at the bottom of the bowl is known as *zoúmo*. Do not discard it; dip warm, crusty bread into it for the best part of the meal.
4. Green Bell Peppers are Key: While red or yellow peppers are sweeter, authentic Horiatiki relies on the bright, slightly bitter crunch of green bell peppers to balance the rich olive oil and creamy cheese.

STORAGE INSTRUCTIONS

- Refrigeration: Traditional Greek salad is best consumed immediately after preparation. However, leftovers can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 days.
- Note: The tomatoes will release excess moisture over time. Drain a bit of the liquid before re-serving, refresh with a drizzle of olive oil, and bring to room temperature for 10 minutes before eating.
- Freezing: Do not freeze this recipe; raw fresh vegetables and feta cheese lose their texture upon thawing.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Estimated values per serving (1/4 of recipe):

Metric	Amount Per Serving
Calories	310 kcal
Total Fat	26 g
<i>Saturated Fat</i>	8 g
<i>Trans Fat</i>	0 g
Cholesterol	45 mg
Sodium	680 mg
Total Carbohydrates	10 g
<i>Dietary Fiber</i>	3 g
<i>Sugars</i>	5 g
Protein	8 g
Vitamin A	18% DV
Vitamin C	45% DV
Calcium	22% DV
Iron	8% DV