

Published July 15th, 2015

## Greek Chickpea Salad is the Perfect Summertime Party Fare

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Greek Chickpea Salad with Tomatoes, Basil, Celery and Kalamata Olives Photo Susie Iventosch

Summertime usually means large group gatherings and it's nice to have some good, dependable recipes for such occasions. We had a group of 10 guests staying at our summer cabin over the past couple of weeks, and, as you can imagine, there is a lot of time spent in the kitchen feeding so many people three meals a day.

Over the past few years, we've settled in on a great set of menus and included in them is the fabulous Turkish meatball recipe from Michaela and Avi Ben-Ari, owners of Kabab-Burger in Lafayette. We ran this recipe a few years ago, and ever since, I make them every few months, and they are always a big hit with our guests (see recipe in the Lamorinda Weekly archives at <http://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0625/Turkish-style-meatballs-in-tomato-sauce.html>). They are perfect with a little homemade hummus, flat bread and salad.

This chickpea salad, made with chopped celery, tomatoes, basil and Kalamata olives is the perfect accompaniment to the meatballs. It is especially great now that locally-grown tomatoes are starting to make their way to the farmers' markets. If you add a little pre-cooked, diced chicken, this salad could be a great summer meal all by itself, too.

### RECIPE

(Serves 8-10 as a side dish)

### INGREDIENTS

Two 16-ounce cans chickpeas (garbanzo beans), drained and rinsed  
 5-6 medium tomatoes, coarsely chopped (or can use 10 oz. or so, cherry tomatoes, halved)  
 6 stalks celery, coarsely chopped  
 1/2 cup Kalamata olives, pitted and cut into quarters  
 8-10 basil leaves, chiffonade (finely sliced or shredded)  
 2-3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
 Juice of 1 lemon  
 Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

### DIRECTIONS

Place chickpeas in the bottom of a large salad bowl. Layer celery, tomatoes, olives and basil, ending with shredded basil on top. (This is just for looks before you toss it.) Drizzle olive oil and lemon juice over all and toss gently. Season with salt and pepper and adjust with more olive oil or lemon juice as desired.

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