

# Salata Fallahiyyeh

## Tomato and Onion Salad

By Riyam Kafri-AbuLaban

This is a simple recipe for what could be the most perfect salad of my childhood. *Salata fallahiyyeh* is a staple on every breakfast table in Palestine and can be served with breakfast dishes such as *mana'ish*, *ijeh* (egg fritters), falafel, or *za'atar o zeit*. It can also be used to garnish and spruce up *labaneh* or fava beans. I have even served the traditional version – finely chopped tomatoes, onions (red, white, or green), and a dressing of lemon, olive oil, and salt – as an appetizer with tortilla chips and yogurt. I have seen modern versions of it, too, where large pieces of tomatoes are combined with slices of red onions. What I share with you here errs on the modern side.

Technically speaking, this is an easy and simple recipe. However, I think it is far more significant than just a simple salad. Tomatoes are a lifeline crop in Palestine. In the cold of winter, with the restrictions imposed on transporting Gaza produce to the West Bank, tomatoes can become expensive. (I'll address this issue in a later article.) Palestinian *baladi* tomatoes taste earthy. When they are sliced open, the smell of acidity and sweetness travels through your nostrils and awakens your taste buds. You can almost smell the nitrogen-rich earth they were grown in.

This salad has a sister – also a staple on the Palestinian table – where freshly picked vegetables, such as green onions, cucumbers, bell peppers, and lettuce, accompany the tomatoes. It's a simple chopped salad dressed with freshly harvested Palestinian olive oil, known for its sharp aftertaste, and fresh lemon juice and salt.

Sometimes the greatest gastronomical pleasures are found in the simplest of things.



### Recipe

- 2 to 3 large tomatoes, sliced
- 1 medium red onion (or 2 small ones)
- the juice of 1 to 2 lemons
- Sea salt to taste
- 2 to 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 square of Arabic cheese

Slice the tomatoes into two longitudinal halves, then slice the pieces into half-circles.

Layer them in a salad bowl.

Slice the onions into thin needles and layer them on top of the tomatoes.

Sprinkle the salad with sea salt, lemon juice, and olive oil.

Cut the white cheese into thin rectangles.

Heat a skillet until sizzling hot and place the cheese in it until it is golden brown on both sides. Place on top of the salad. Garnish with parsley (optional).

*Sahtein!*

