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Lunch Break

A 'World's Best' Chef Shares the Recipe for Perfect Summer Salad

Mauro Colagreco, of top-ranked Mirazur in the south of France, offers his take on tuna nicoise.

By [Kate Krader](#)

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A world-class take on salade nicoise. *Photographer: Caroline Bramlett*

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Editor's Note: As we begin leaving our home kitchens and dining out more, the weekly [Lunch Break](#) column will evolve to highlight dishes from a variety of sources: a new or reopened restaurant; a newsmaking person, place, or recipe; or, of course, a great cookbook.

We are in a back-to-school moment for the world's best chefs.

On June 1, Rene Redzepi reopened the doors to his groundbreaking Copenhagen restaurant Noma. (In a conversation with Bloomberg Opinion, Redzepi said that, so far, the dining room was full of mostly locals, but that he had seen some tourists.) In New York, Eleven Madison Park and chef/owner Daniel Humm introduced the public to a much-hyped vegan menu on June 10.

And on June 9, the current holder of the World's Best Restaurant title, Mirazur in Menton in the south of France, also reopened. The idyllic Provencal dining room, run by chef Mauro Colagreco, will continue to be the No. 1-ranked restaurant in the world until Oct. 5, when the announcement for the 2021 winner will be made, if all goes according to plan, in Antwerp, Belgium. The awards were paused in 2020 because of the pandemic.



Mauro Colagreco at Florie's in Palm Beach, Fla. Photographer: Emily Hawkes

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Colagreco's cooking at Mirazur is informed by the beauty of nature, with such dishes as prawns arriving assembled into the shape of a rose. The restaurant also has a very serious garden, which the chef takes advantage of in almost all his dishes. But there's nothing so basic as the region's signature nicoise salad on any of the tasting menus, which start at \$378.

But there's a glorious take on it at Colagreco's restaurant Florie's, at the Four Seasons Resort Palm Beach in South Florida. It's called the Riviera salad, and it's got several of the signature ingredients of its Mediterranean ancestor, including tuna (albeit a fresh steak instead of canned), olives, hard-boiled eggs, anchovies, roast peppers, and tomatoes. The jumble of other ingredients Colagreco adds, such as chopped

herbs, lettuces, and cucumber, make it the kind of all-in-one salad that you want to eat throughout this hot season. Not to mention, a dish to commemorate Bastille Day on July 14.

“Florie’s Riviera Salad is a simple ‘summer-in-the-Mediterranean’ example of using the best and freshest produce possible,” said Colagreco in an email. “That’s always been one of primary inspirations in my cooking style. It uses a mix of local greens and a variety of fresh herbs and crisp vegetables which makes a colorful and refreshing arrangement.”



Source: Mirazur

At Florie’s, the Riviera salad has been a best-seller since the restaurant opened in 2019. Even during the pandemic, when the Four Seasons was privately booked until April 2021, the dish stayed on the menu. Make it and you’ll see why. It features lettuces bathed in a bright lemon dressing, topped with an abundance of fresh vegetables that offer an array of textures when you take a bite, from salty olives to bright cucumber to pungent spring onions and a burst of tomatoes. Crowning the salad is barely cooked tuna steak, terrific with the savory tapenade crouton. If you feel strongly about canned tuna here, give it a shot. And if you must have the classic green beans and potatoes, you can, but it will slow the dish down.

“Simplicity is key. You don’t need to be overly fussy with preparation,” advises Colagreco. “I choose to focus on sourcing the best ingredients available and letting them shine on the plate with more natural presentation.” Still, his restaurant version is decorated with shelled fava beans and crispy fried artichoke leaves. If you have sous chefs on hand to prep and cook them, add them in. Otherwise, don’t worry about it. It’s summer!

The following recipe is adapted from Mauro Colagreco and Florie’s. Testers note: The ingredient list is long and you can take shortcuts, like buying roasted red peppers—but if you have time, roasting them yourself is worth it.

The Riviera Salad



The perfect summer cool-down salad. Photographer: Kate Krader/Bloomberg

Serves 4