

Hearts of Palm Salad with cucumber, tomato, parsley, and lime

Hearts of palm are woefully under-appreciated. Perhaps it's because you don't really know what they are. (They're the tender insides of the cabbage palm tree, sold in cans or jars.) Perhaps it's because you don't know what to do with them. (Try substituting them for olives or capers in cold preparations.) Perhaps it's because you don't know where to find them. (Trader Joe's and other large supermarkets.)

This salad's refreshingly bracing and uncomplicated, and perfect for sticky summer weather. If you feel a need to bulk it up, toss in avocado, corn, or even cooked bulgur.

Serves 2 for lunch or 4 as a side

1-1/2 tablespoons lime juice

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Salt and pepper

½ medium white onion, finely chopped

One 14.5 ounce jar hearts of palm, drained, cut crosswise into rounds

Persian or other small cucumbers, or 1/2 English cucumber, cut crosswise into chunky rounds

1 cup mixed variety small tomatoes, halved

Big handful of Italian parsley

In the bottom of a serving bowl, whisk the oil, lime juice, and a generous pinch of salt and pepper. Gently fold in the onion, hearts of palm, cucumbers, and tomatoes. Shower with parsley. Let stand 15 minutes at room temperature. Then serve right away, or chill for up to one hour.