

# Sundried Tomato Dense Bean Salad

Mediterranean · 2026-04-30



Yield	Active Time	Total Time	Region	Date
6-8 servings	25 min	25 min	Mediterranean	2026-04-30

[meal-prep](#) [high-fiber](#) [high-protein](#) [no-cook](#) [social-media-trend](#)

## Cultural Context

Dense bean salads became a social-media meal-prep staple through creator Violet Witchel, who popularized hearty chopped salads built around beans, crunchy vegetables, and punchy vinaigrettes. This sundried tomato version leans Mediterranean-Italian with white beans, chickpeas, artichoke hearts, basil, parsley, mozzarella, pepperoni, and a red wine vinaigrette emulsified with oil from the jar of sundried tomatoes.

## Ingredients

### Main Components

- 1 medium shallot, finely minced
- 1 bunch flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped

- 1 orange bell pepper, cored and diced small
- 1 yellow bell pepper, cored and diced small
- 454 g (16 oz / about 3 cups) cherry tomatoes, halved
- 4 large basil leaves, minced
- 170 g (6 oz) pepperoni, roughly chopped
- 227 g (8 oz / 1/2 lb) smoked chipotle cooked chicken, chopped
- 75 g (1/2 cup) drained sundried tomatoes, roughly chopped, oil reserved
- 85 g (1/2 cup) drained artichoke hearts, roughly chopped
- 1 425 g (15 oz) can white beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 425 g (15 oz) can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 1 454 g (16 oz) container mini mozzarella balls in water, drained

### **For the Dressing**

- 30 ml (2 tbsp) reserved sundried tomato oil
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) garlic olive oil
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) red wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp Italian seasoning blend
- 1 large pinch sea salt, plus more to taste
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- Juice of 1 lemon

### **Substitutions:**

- Smoked chipotle chicken -> cooked rotisserie chicken, smoked turkey, or omit for a vegetarian salad.
- Mini mozzarella -> diced fresh mozzarella, feta, or marinated tofu.
- Garlic olive oil -> extra-virgin olive oil plus 1 small grated garlic clove.

### **Equipment**

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- Large mixing bowl
- Cutting board and sharp knife
- Fine-mesh strainer or colander
- Small jar, whisk, or milk frother for the dressing
- Airtight storage containers

## Instructions

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### Preparation (Active time: 25 min)

1. **Prep the vegetables and herbs:** Finely mince the shallot. Dice the bell peppers into small, bean-sized pieces. Mince the parsley and basil. Halve the cherry tomatoes. Keep the pieces small enough that each bite gets beans, vegetables, herbs, and dressing.
2. **Prep the meats and marinated vegetables:** Roughly chop the pepperoni and cooked smoked chipotle chicken. Drain the sundried tomatoes over a small bowl so you can save at least 2 tablespoons of the oil, then chop the tomatoes and artichoke hearts.
3. **Drain the beans and mozzarella:** Rinse the white beans and chickpeas until the water runs mostly clear, then drain very well. Drain the mozzarella balls. Excess water will dilute the vinaigrette, so let everything sit in the strainer for a minute if needed.

### Assembly & Finishing

4. **Combine the salad:** Add the shallot, bell peppers, parsley, basil, cherry tomatoes, pepperoni, chicken, sundried tomatoes, artichoke hearts, white beans, chickpeas, and mozzarella to a large bowl.
5. **Make the dressing:** In a small jar or cup, combine the reserved sundried tomato oil, garlic olive oil, red wine vinegar, Italian seasoning, sea salt, Dijon mustard, and lemon juice. Shake, whisk, or froth until creamy-looking and well emulsified.
6. **Dress and serve:** Pour the dressing over the salad and toss until evenly coated. Taste and adjust with salt, lemon juice, or vinegar. Serve right away, or chill 30 minutes so the beans absorb more of the dressing.

## Food Safety & Storage

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- **Minimum safe internal temperature:** Use only fully cooked chicken that has previously reached 165°F (74°C).
- **Cold holding:** Keep the salad refrigerated at or below 40°F (4°C). Do not leave it at room temperature for more than 2 hours, or more than 1 hour if the room is above 90°F (32°C).
- **Storage:** Refrigerate in airtight containers for up to 4 days. Portioning into individual containers helps keep the salad fresher for meal prep.
- **Freezing:** Not recommended; tomatoes, mozzarella, and beans become watery and grainy after thawing.
- **Reheating:** Serve cold or at cool room temperature. If serving in a wrap, warm only the wrap separately, then add the chilled salad.

## Serving Suggestions

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- Spoon into warmed tortillas or lavash for a meal-prep wrap.
- Serve over arugula, chopped romaine, or baby spinach for a bigger salad bowl.
- Pair with toasted sourdough, pita chips, or a simple vegetable soup.

- Traditional serving style: This is a modern social-media meal-prep salad rather than a traditional regional dish; the flavor profile borrows from Mediterranean antipasto salads.

## Scaling Notes

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**Half recipe (1/2x):** Use one can of beans total, about 8 oz mozzarella, and halve the vegetables and dressing. Keep the full lemon juice only if you prefer a sharper vinaigrette.

**Double recipe (2x):** Mix in two large bowls so the beans do not get crushed. Dress just before portioning, and use very large airtight containers.

## Chef's Notes

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- **Sourcing:** Look for sundried tomatoes packed in oil because the seasoned oil is part of the dressing. Use good canned beans that hold their shape after rinsing.
- **Make-ahead:** The salad improves after a short rest and keeps its texture well because it has no leafy greens.
- **Variations:** Swap pepperoni and chicken for salami, smoked turkey, grilled chicken, or chickpea-only vegetarian protein. Add olives, cucumber, or roasted red peppers if serving the same day.
- **Common pitfalls:** Do not skip draining the beans, mozzarella, and marinated vegetables well. Watery ingredients flatten the vinaigrette and shorten storage quality.

## Nutrition Information (Optional)

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*Per serving, assuming 8 servings: approximately 440 kcal - Protein: 24g | Fat: 27g | Carbohydrates: 29g | Fiber: 8g*

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## Sources

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- Fit&Well, "The most popular dense bean salad recipe, according to its creator, TikTok star Violet Witchel" (published March 21, 2026):  
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- National Geographic, "The surprising benefits of the dense bean salad trend":  
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/dense-bean-salad-benefits>
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<https://www.forbes.com/sites/soniathompson/2026/02/26/the-dense-bean-salad-effect-why-community-now-drives-growth/>
- Food Network, "The Make-Ahead Salads That Don't Get Soggy":  
<https://www.foodnetwork.com/fn-dish/news/dense-bean-salad-recipes-tiktok-violet-witchel>
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### **Version History:**

- v1 (2026-04-30): Initial recipe by @Codex

### **Credits:**

- Recipe development: @Codex, adapted closely from Violet Witchel's sundried tomato dense bean salad as published by Fit&Well
- Testing: @Codex
- Verification: @Coordinator
- Photography: FitTasteTic / Jonas Zeschke via Wikimedia Commons and Flickr, licensed CC BY-SA 2.0

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### **Recipe Location:**

`/Recipes/Recipe-of-the-Week/Recipes/2026-04-30_sundried-tomato-dense-bean-salad.md`

**Images Location:** `/Images/sundried-tomato-dense-bean-salad/`