

## A Tailgate Favorite with a Salute to a Traditional New Orleans Favorite

Whether you're tailgating for professional (Go Bengals!) or college (Go Falcons!) or high school (Go Tigers!) football or just watching the games on television, this mammoth hero sandwich will score every time! And especially at this time, to salute the fabulous cuisine of New Orleans and Louisiana with all its traditional favorite foods that will survive whatever Mother Nature throws its way, here is my recipe for the Muffuletta!

A Muffuletta is a New Orleans original hero-type sandwich created at the Central Grocery in 1906 in New Orleans. It is legendary in Louisiana and the marvelous Olive Salad is what sets it apart from any other hero sandwich. When I was in New Orleans last year, I visited the Central Grocery store with all its yesteryear charm and look forward to its renovation and to the days it is making up its special Muffuletta to charm the world. Until that time, join me in a salute to this wonderful part of the country which will come back stronger and more wonderful, as we continue to enjoy the taste of classic New Orleans fare - just in time for tailgating - not to be confused with alligator tail, which is also a specialty.

### Tailgatin' New Orleans Muffuletta

1 loaf	Un sliced large round Crusty Italian or Sourdough Bread (8-10")*
½ lb.	Genoa Salami, thinly sliced
½ lb.	Provolone Cheese, thinly sliced
¼ lb.	Smoked Ham, thinly sliced
	(additional ingredients – see below)

### Olive Salad for Muffuletta

1/3 Cup	Extra Virgin Olive Oil
2 Tab.	Balsamic Vinegar or Red Wine Vinegar
2 Cloves	Fresh Garlic, minced
½ Cup	Pimiento-stuffed Green Olives, finely chopped
½ Cup	Kalamata or Ripe Olives, finely chopped
¼ Cup	Celery, finely chopped
¼ Cup	Red Onion, finely chopped
2 Tsp.	Fresh Oregano, minced
2 Tab.	Fresh Parsley, minced
¼ -1/2 Tsp.	Freshly Ground Black Pepper

Whisk together first two ingredients and combine well with the remaining ingredients. Cover and refrigerate - best if refrigerated at least 8 hours. Stir occasionally.

To Olive Salad:

Can also add capers, anchovy filets (mashed into olive oil before whisking), and chopped sweet red pepper. Some folks in New Orleans like to add chopped mixed pickled vegetables, but I prefer to keep the Olive Salad basic and serve the pickled vegetables as a side item.

Preparation:

Cut bread horizontally in half. Starting about 1 inch from the crust, remove ½ inch layer of soft bread from inside of each half, leaving shells about 1 inch thick bread.

Drain Olive Salad, reserving the marinade. Brush this reserved marinade over the cut sides of the bread. Spoon ½ to ¾ of the olive salad over the bottom crust of bread.



Top with ½ the cheese and one of the meats. Repeat with the remaining cheese and meat and finish the layering with the remainder of the olive salad. Cover with the top half of the bread.

You can serve immediately by cutting round sandwich into 6 large wedges or wrap up in aluminum wrap and head for the game. (It may be easier to cut in large wedges ahead of time and wrap so you don't need to remember to bring a large knife and cutting board to the tailgate party.)

\*\*\*\* One Muffuletta makes 6 large servings!

If you're at home and you would like your Muffuletta served warm, simply wrap the Muffuletta in a large piece of aluminum foil and place the sandwich on a cookie sheet and warm it in a 375 degree oven for 25-30 minutes or until heated through and cheese is melted. Carefully remove the foil and cut the sandwiches into wedges to serve.

- You can also serve this Muffuletta by adding lettuce and fresh tomato slices on the bottom layer - especially with the wonderful tomatoes at the Jungle right now. You can find the best olives at Jungle Jim's Olive Bar right across from the Deli featuring Boar's Head meats and cheeses. You can make this Muffuletta with a traditional large round loaf of bread or you can purchase small round loaves and make individual versions of this classic!

Hope you enjoy this Muffuletta at your next Tailgate Party!

Jungle Jim's Margie Potts