

Bruschetta

*Makes 3-6 pieces, depending on the size of the bread and how densely the tomato mixture is spread.
Multiply recipe accordingly to make more servings.*

Use home-grown, grass-fed and organic ingredients whenever possible.

Ingredients:

1 - 1 ½ tsp garlic, freshly pressed
2 TBSP extra virgin olive oil

1 TBSP extra virgin olive oil (additional)
1 cup tomatoes, diced in ¼" pieces (Roma, grape or cherry)
3 TBSP fresh basil, chopped coarsely (see directions)
1 tsp balsamic vinegar
1/8 tsp pink Himalayan salt
1/8 tsp freshly ground peppercorns

1-2 oz mozzarella cheese, grated or thinly sliced
French Bread or Baguette as per desired number of servings

Directions:

1. Press garlic cloves to measure 1 or 1 ½ tsp. Add 2 TBSP olive oil and set aside.
2. Dice tomatoes small, approximately ¼" pieces.
3. Roll fresh basil leaves in tight bunch, then cut across (chiffonade), then do cross-cuts to cut into smaller pieces. Add to tomatoes.
4. Add balsamic vinegar, salt and freshly ground pepper to tomatoes and gently stir to mix.
5. Heat a small saute pan on medium high heat, then add 1 TBSP extra virgin olive oil, followed by the tomato mixture. Watch closely; when tomatoes begin to simmer, time for 1 minute. Remove from heat.
6. Prepare French bread or baguette by slicing in ½" pieces, then brushing with the garlic/olive oil mixture. Add grated or thinly sliced mozzarella cheese on top of the bread. Spoon the tomato/basil mixture onto bread and place on small oven-proof pan and broil under pre-heated broiler for 2-3 minutes. Watch closely! Serve immediately.

Variations:

1. Substitute a flour tortilla in place of the French bread. Granted, it's not as delicious as the French bread style – but in a pinch when you are hungry for bruschetta, you can still have it!
2. Add additional mozzarella cheese on top of the tomato/basil mixture and then broil, to create mini pizzas. Serve with a fresh, green salad.
3. If desired, you can make this the traditional Italian way by using all raw ingredients (no cooking). I personally like the way the flavors meld together with the quick heating in the saucepan, which also has an added health benefit: The cooking of the tomatoes helps to release *lycopene*, a powerful antioxidant that decreases cancer and heart-disease risk.

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