Three Festive Crostini

A wonderfully topped crostini is just the small bite to enjoy as the party starts! Toast slices of baguette quickly so that the outside is a nice golden brown but the inside is still fresh and not dried out. Top with one of the three toppings below and you will have a happy crowd!

Avocado-Tomato Crostini

Makes 16 crostini

Ingredients:

1 avocado

2 tablespoons fresh lime juice

1 shallot, finely minced

1/4 teaspoon ground cumin

1/4 teaspoon Kosher salt

1/2 cup finely diced tomatoes, seeded

1 tablespoon cilantro, minced

16 baquette slices. 1/2-inch thick

Olive oil for brushing

1-2 cloves peeled garlic for rubbing

Directions:

- 1. Cut and seed the avocado. Remove the avocado flesh from the skin and smash to a chunky consistency in a small bowl with the lime juice, shallot, cumin, and salt. Set aside.
- 2. Dice the tomatoes, seeding and draining juices away. Toss the cilantro with the diced tomatoes.
- 3. Prepare the crostini by arranging the slices in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet. Lightly brush both sides of each slice with olive oil. In a hot 425°F oven, toast the first side to a golden brown, turn and toast the second side. (The second side toasts much faster watch!)
- 4. When just cool enough to handle, rub a peeled clove of garlic on one side of the toasted crostini.
- 5. Top the crostini by smearing a spoonful of the avocado mix on each slice, top with a spoonful of the tomatoes and cilantro, and serve.

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Roasted Red Pepper and Chimichurri Crostini

Makes 16 crostini

Ingredients:

1 cup parsley leaves, packed

2 cloves garlic

2 tablespoons white wine vinegar

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 shallot, finely minced

1/2 teaspoon dried oregano

1/2 teaspoon black pepper

1/2 teaspoon Kosher salt

1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper

3 roasted red peppers, (jarred)

8 oz. herbed Boursin cheese

16 baquette slices, 1/2-inch thick

Olive oil for brushing

1-2 cloves peeled garlic for rubbing

Directions:

- 1. To make the chimichurri, place the parsley, garlic, olive oil, white wine vinegar, shallot, oregano, pepper, salt, and cayenne in the workbowl of a food processor. Pulse until the mixture is evenly and finely chopped; scrape down the sides frequently.
- 2. Prepare the roasted red peppers draining well. Cut 1/4-inch strips. Pat dry if necessary. Set aside until time to assemble the crostini.
- 3. Prepare the crostini by arranging the slices in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet. Lightly brush both sides of each slice with olive oil. In a hot 425°F oven, toast the first side to a golden brown, turn and toast the second side. (The second side toasts much faster watch!)
- 4. When just cool enough to handle, rub a peeled clove of garlic on one side of the toasted crostini.
- 5. Top the crostini with a thin layer of the herbed Boursin cheese. Place three strips of red pepper across each slice in a diagonal fashion.
- 6. Drizzle stripes of the chimichurri between the red pepper strips. Serve.

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French Onion Crostini

Makes 16 crostini

Ingredients:

1 large onion
2 tablespoons olive oil
1/4 teaspoon Kosher salt
4 oz. Gruyère, shredded
1-2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves
16 baguette slices, 1/2-inch thick
Olive oil for brushing
1-2 cloves peeled garlic for rubbing

Directions:

- 1. Slice the onion in half, then each half into half moon slices about 1/8-inch thick.
- 2. In a large skillet, sauté the onion slices in the olive oil over a medium-low heat for about 30 minutes stirring frequently. The onions will be soft and silky with a lovely golden brown color when done. Set aside until ready to assemble the crostini. (This step may be done a day or two ahead of time.)
- 3. Prepare the crostini by arranging the slices in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet. Lightly brush both sides of each slice with olive oil. In a hot 425°F oven, toast the first side to a golden brown, turn and toast the second side. (The second side toasts much faster watch!)
- 4. When just cool enough to handle, rub a peeled clove of garlic on one side of the toasted crostini.
- 5. Top the each slice with shredded Gruyère and return to the oven. Remove once the cheese has melted but not browned.
- 6. Spread a spoonful of the caramelized onions on each crostini. Sprinkle with the fresh thyme leaves, and serve.