

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 baguette 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 baguette 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.