

Trio of Bruschetta

Those Ancient Romans. What would we have done without their culinary curiosity? From the Italian verb *bruciare* — “to roast over coals” or “to burn” — bruschetta (brew-SKET-tah) is simply that, grilled bread. Legends say it was made originally by ancient Romans and Etruscans, it has evolved over time from its most simple form: toasted bread rubbed with garlic, salt and drizzled with oil, called *fett'unta*, to a vehicle to showcase exquisite toppings. From sauteed mushrooms to the ripest of tomatoes to slices of cured lard or salame, the toppings vary, but hold in common their simplicity and quality. And don't be caught calling the toppings bruschetta. Remember it's the bread that's burnt. All hail.

Ingredients

bruschetta

1 baguette, ends trimmed, cut into 1/2-inch slices to make 36 slices
2 cloves garlic, halved lengthwise

grilled mushrooms

8 ounces cremini mushrooms, cleaned and trimmed
1/4 cup plus 1 teaspoon olive oil
1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves, chopped
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
Freshly ground pepper
1/4 cup fresh mint leaves, loosely packed, finely chopped
A small wedge of Parmigiano-Reggiano

zucchini

1 medium zucchini, about 10 ounces
2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
1/8 teaspoon kosher salt
3/4 cup fresh ricotta

tomato-basil

4 large fresh basil leaves
2 plum tomatoes, finely chopped (about 1 cup), or 1/2 pound other ripe tomatoes
2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
1/2 clove garlic, smashed
Maldon sea salt, for sprinkling

special equipment

grill
metal skewers

Directions

for the bruschetta

Heat a grill to high heat. Grill the bread slices until they brown lightly, flipping from side to side. Rub one side of each slice with the cut side of garlic, then discard the garlic cloves.

for the grilled mushrooms

Halve any really large mushrooms. Mix the 1/4 cup oil, thyme, salt and as much pepper as you like in a bowl. Toss the mushrooms in the seasoned oil. Skewer the mushrooms on metal skewers, close but not touching. Grill, turning, until they soften and lightly brown, about 8 minutes. Remove from the skewers and finely chop. Stir in the mint and remaining teaspoon of oil. Mound a heaping tablespoon of mushrooms on each of 12 bruschetta. Shave some cheese shards off the block using a vegetable peeler, and scatter them on the bruschetta.

for the zucchini

Using a wide vegetable peeler, peel and discard the skin of the zucchini then slice it into 12 long, thin strips, avoiding the seedy center. Gently toss the zucchini strips with the oil, lemon and salt. Fold 1 strip zucchini on each of 12 bruschetta. Dollop 1 tablespoon fresh ricotta on each.

for the tomato-basil

Tear the basil into small pieces over the chopped tomato in a small bowl. Stir in the oil and garlic. Let sit a few minutes for the flavors to combine. Mound a heaping tablespoon of tomatoes on each of 12 bruschetta, avoiding the garlic. Sprinkle each with a little sea salt.

total time: 45 minutes

active prep: 45 minutes

serves: 4 to 6

difficulty: *easy*