



Fresh Mozzarella and Tomato Crostini

Easy to make, crostini are an excellent way to present a taste of fresh seasonal ingredients. This simple combination of ripe tomatoes, basil and fresh mozzarella makes a perfect alfresco snack.

Extra-virgin olive oil for baking, plus 1/4 cup
1 baguette, cut crosswise into 1/4-inch-thick slices
Salt and coarsely ground pepper, to taste
8 vine-ripened tomatoes, about 1 1/2 lb.
1/2 cup slivered fresh basil leaves
2 Tbs. finely minced red onion
1/4 tsp. minced garlic
1 Tbs. aged balsamic vinegar
1 1/2 lb. fresh mozzarella cheese



Preheat an oven to 350°F.

Brush a baking sheet with olive oil and arrange the baguette slices on the sheet in a single layer. Brush the tops with oil, and season with salt and pepper. Bake until crisp and golden, 15 to 18 minutes. Let cool, then store the crostini in an airtight container at room temperature until ready to use.

Core and seed the tomatoes and slice lengthwise into 1/4-inch-thick slices. In a mixing bowl, combine the tomatoes, half of the basil, the onion, garlic, vinegar, the remaining 1/4 cup olive oil, salt and pepper and mix well.

Slice the mozzarella into 1/4-inch-thick pieces or into smaller pieces so they fit on the crostini. To assemble, lay a piece of mozzarella on each crostini and spoon 1 to 2 Tbs. of the tomato salad on top. Garnish each with a pinch of the remaining basil. Serve immediately. Serves 8.