

# Crostini: Goodbye Summer, Hello Fall

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[Ode to Summer Crostini (or basil-mint ricotta crostini with fresh zucchini and tomatoes)]

[Prep: 20 mins / Cook: 10 mins / Total: 20mins]

[Serving size: about 16 or half a baguette]

- 1 zucchini washed and peeled into long slices
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, washed, quartered, marinated in olive oil and salt
- 1 cup basil, washed and stemmed (about 1 large bunch)
- 1/3 cup mint, washed and stemmed (about 1 small bunch)
- 1 tablespoon pine nuts
- Zest from 1 lemon and juice from 1/2
- 3 cloves garlic peeled and cut in half
- ricotta cheese
- ricotta salata or parmesan, grated as topping
- olive oil
- salt
- pepper
- 1/2 baguette, cut into 1/4 slices

Welcome to Fall Crostini (or balsamic raisins with sauteed olives and almonds crostini)

[Prep: 15 mins / Cook: 15 mins / Total: 30mins]

[Serving size: about 16 or half a baguette]

- 1/2 cup kalamata olives, pitted and quartered
- 1 cup balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1/3 cup raisins, golden or regular
- 1/3 cup roasted unsalted almonds silvered

- 1 clove garlic peeled and cut in half
- ricotta cheese
- ricotta salata or parmesan, grated as topping
- olive oil
- salt
- pepper
- 1/2 baguette, cut into 1/4 slices

Let's start with the Ode to Summer Crostini:

Preheat your oven to 350° slice baguette into 1/4" thick slices, transfer to a large cookie sheet and brush with olive oil and lightly salt. *(Note: If you are only making the summer crostini you should pop the bread slices into the oven as soon as it is hot and let them bake for 10 minutes. If you are making both summer and fall crostini you should wait until you are simmering the balsamic reduction to put the bread into the oven)*

With a vegetable peeler take your zucchini and peel away - I rotated the zucchini 3 times, while peeling it, stopping on each side when I reached the seeds, so that I was left with a core. You can discard the core and now you have a nice fresh pile of zucchini strips. Transfer them to a small mixing bowl, lightly salt and toss with the lemon juice and zest. Quarter your cherry tomatoes and transfer to another small mixing bowl, add 1 tablespoon olive oil and a dash of salt and let sit.

In a blender or small food processor add the mint, basil, pine nuts, 2 garlic cloves and salt. Blend until smooth. Add the ricotta cheese and blend again until incorporated.

If you are only making the summer crostini, then remove baguette slices – now crostini!– from the oven, let them cool for 1 minute, then rub them with the raw garlic clove. Add tablespoon of the basil-mint ricotta mixture, a strip of zucchini, some cherry tomatoes and some freshly grated ricotta salata. Enjoy!

For the Welcome to Fall Crostini:

Pour the balsamic vinegar and honey into a small skillet and cook over high heat until it begins to bubble/boil. Lower the heat and let the mixture simmer for 5 minutes, add the raisins and let simmer until the mixture has reduced to half of its volume and is thick enough to coat a spoon, this should take about 5 more minutes.

Put baguette slices in the oven and set timer to 10 minutes (Don't forget to lightly coat them in olive oil and a little salt if you haven't already!)

Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a small skillet over med-high heat. After 1 minute add the olive slices and almond slivers, cooking for 5 minutes stirring occasionally. Remove from heat.

In a small mixing bowl whip the ricotta cheese with a little olive oil, salt and pepper.

Remove baguette slices – now crostini – from the oven and rub them with the raw garlic.

To create the fall crostini, add 1 tablespoon of the simple whipped ricotta, a little bit of the olive-almond mixture and top off with some freshly grated ricotta salata and finish with a drizzle of the raisin balsamic reduction.

This is how you enjoy two seasons at once!