

Ten fast, simple ideas for entertaining with bread

This week's recipe is courtesy of Ace Bakery. To accompany their recipe, Ace Bakery sent me a list of 10 fast and simple ideas for entertaining with bread. Here they are for you to enjoy:

1. For a new twist on the sandwich, cut an Ace Bakery baguette horizontally and pack it with your favourite fillings. Then allow your guests to cut a sandwich the size of their choice.
2. Cut your day-old bread into one-inch cubes and freeze until you have enough to transform them into croutons for soups and salads. For low fat croutons, bake the cubes in a 375F oven until golden.
3. Thinly slice day-old bread, brush with olive oil or melted butter and bake in a 375F oven for 10 minutes. The crisps are a wonderful accompaniment to cheese or dips and will last one week in a sealed plastic container or bag.
4. Pulse your day-old bread in the food processor for finely ground breadcrumbs. Bag and freeze the breadcrumbs until needed.
5. Hollow out a round or oval loaf and fill the opening with your favourite dip or spread. Cut the bread in pieces or cubes to dip.
6. To crisp the crust, place your bread in a 400F oven for about five minutes. Let sit five minutes before slicing.
7. Never refrigerate bread— it becomes stale more quickly. Bread stays fresh



What's cookin'

Lori Gysel
Gerry Kentner

8. longer when stored in a cloth bread bag.
8. When defrosting bread, leave it in the plastic bag until completely thawed. Crisp in a 400F oven for five minutes.
9. When making French toast for company, you can lightly brown bread on both sides in a fry pan up to two hours prior to your guests' arrival. Then bake in a 400F oven for 5-7 minutes before serving.

10. For instant pizza, top focaccia with grated parmesan and any of the following sautéed onions, black olives, fresh thyme or grated cheddar. Bake in a 375F oven until warmed through.20.

After reading all these Ace Bakery suggestions, the only problem I can see, is that they are assuming that you will actually have day-old bread to use for some of these ideas! I know that every time I bring Ace bread into my house it is all gobbled up the first time around and any leftover is simply not an issue!

Have fun and keep cooking!

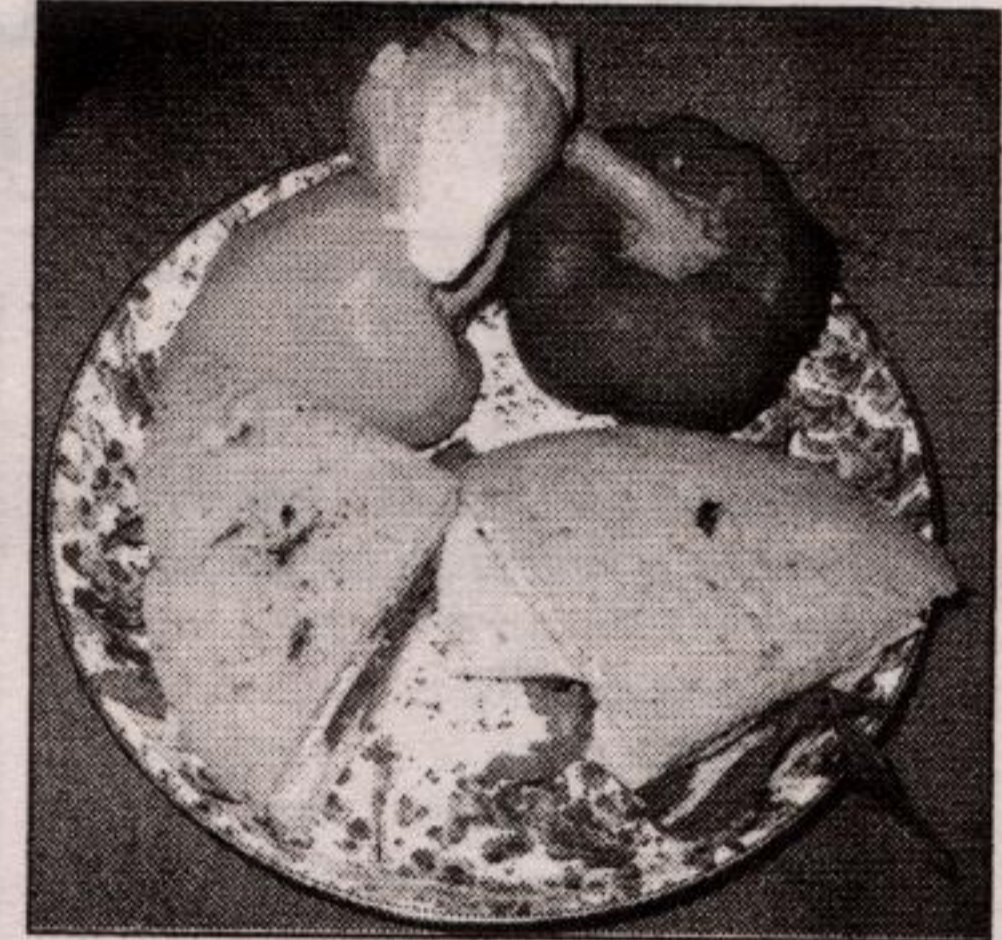
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Roasted sweet pepper and fontina cheese on rosemary focaccia

(Recipe supplied by Ace Bakery; makes four sandwiches)

Ingredients

- 1 head roasted garlic (see below)
- 3 red bell peppers, roasted, peeled, seeded and julienned
- 3 yellow bell peppers, roasted, peeled, seeded and julienned
- 8 oz. sliced fontina cheese
- 1 bunch fresh arugula, washed twice
- basil, purée (see below)



Method

To prepare the sandwich, slice focaccia loaf lengthwise; spread bottom slice of bread with roasted garlic, arrange six to eight slices of red and yellow peppers on top of roasted garlic. Top with fontina cheese and three to four arugula leaves. Season with salt and pepper. On the top slice of bread drizzle a small amount of the basil purée and spread with a knife. Slice focaccia into four sandwiches.

Roasted garlic: Preheat oven to 300F. Slice 1/4-inch off the top of the garlic head, drizzle each head with one tablespoon of olive oil, wrap in tin foil and roast until soft (approximately one hour). Squeeze individual cloves, when cool enough to handle, into bowl and combine to make a paste.

Basil purée: In a food processor, purée one cup of packed fresh basil, one clove of garlic, 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil and a pinch of salt. Purée in food processor and store in squeeze bottle.



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