

## Bruschetta with Tomato Basil Topping (properly pronounced brew-sket-ah)

1-2 French or Italian baguettes  
6 cups heirloom tomato variety, washed and cubed/diced  
4 cloves fresh garlic, minced  
2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil  
2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar  
¾ cup (approx loosely packed measure) fresh basil leaves, chopped  
1 fresh lime  
Coarse ground kosher salt or sea salt to taste  
Fresh ground black peppercorn to taste



Slice baguette(s) into ¾" to 1" slices (cutting the baguette at a 30ish degree diagonal angle makes for better presentation as shown in the picture). Line two large cookie sheets with parchment paper then brush or dip one side of slices with extra virgin olive oil (use enough bread to fill cookie sheets to capacity with the slices). Place slices **oil side down** on parchment lined cookie sheets, toast in oven preheated to 350° F until golden brown; approx 15 minutes but toasting time varies. Don't worry that bread slices may seem dry/crunchy, that's desirable.

If storing the toasted bruschetta slices, be sure to **completely cool** before putting them in an airtight container.

Combine next 5 ingredients in a bowl. Tomatoes do not require peeling. Dicing/cubing size is at your discretion but roughly ½" works well. See blog post for helpful info on heirloom tomatoes and especially balsamic vinegar. Recommended fresh basil leaf measure is loosely packed and BEFORE chopping. You may want to experiment on the amount of basil use but this recommended amount is a good baseline.

Next, squeeze fresh lime halves over mixture. This will permit trace amounts of rind oil to be extracted which adds extra character to the recipe.

Add salt and pepper to taste but again, info on blog post is very helpful on choosing a good salt.

Mixture can be used immediately on cooled bruschetta. You'll note the mixture is "watery" from the natural juiciness of the tomatoes but that is good since it softens the bruschetta slices. Don't worry about leftovers. This recipe is great immediately and same day, but actually improves later as the ingredients in the mixture become more flavor infused with each other. It will easily keep for up to two weeks refrigerated.

For an extra touch you can sprinkle feta cheese or goat cheese on top as a decorative and flavorful addition but I've found this recipe so stellar as written that you won't need this option except to add a bit more eye appeal and prestige (and there's nothing wrong with that).

Yield is about 12 servings...maybe. This stuff is a hit every time so make plenty for generous portions and adjust up or down on recipe size to suit your needs.

Note: Blog post referenced can be found at: [melabuild.com/summertime-favorite/](http://melabuild.com/summertime-favorite/)