

Chef from the Hood Recipes

**Chef:**

Barbara Gonnella

Restaurant:

The Union Hotel, Occidental

Recipe:

Barbara's Bruchetta!

Ingredients:

1 lb. sourdough bread loaf angle cut into 1" slices 1head garlic peeled; roughly minced; then sweated with 2 cups of good olive oil until garlic is just golden. 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese 4 cups 1/2" chunks of Roma tomatoes (buy 2 pounds) 1/2 cup fresh chopped basil; salt & ground pepper

Barbara's bruchetta is beautiful! Redolant with fresh garlic, basil and Roma tomatoes; crispy-chewy yet soft near the center, it's one of those rare, simple pleasures that's especially terrific when made with locally grown tomatoes. Barbara Gonnella says, "I first made bruchetta for a party and continued to play with the ingredients until I thought I had it. It's now so popular here; people love to sit out on our patio with an order of bruchetta and a glass of wine." I'm one of those people, but most recently took an order to-go intending to serve it later at home. As I navigated the curvy road out of Occidental, my car filled with an irresistible aroma. Overcome by desire, I succumbed to a piece while driving! Later, the remaining bruchetta reheated beautifully on a pizza stone in the oven. Barbara's recipe serves 6 to 8.

Preheat oven (& pizza stone if you have one) 400°. Lay bread slices close together & brush cut sides with garlic/oil. Try to get some of the oil on the crusts too, using up half of the oil/garlic mixture. Sprinkle cheese over one cut side. Let slices sit while you prep the tomatoes & basil. Mix the remaining garlic/oil with tomatoes, basil & add salt/pepper (to taste). Divide this mixture over the slices. Move slices to pan or stone, leaving room around each slice. Bake 10 to 15 minutes or until edges get toasty and golden.