

# tomato bruschetta with asparagus, gorgonzola, and basil salad

- Serves: 8 regular servings or 6 greedy ones
- Preparation: 25 minutes

Our friend Rita lives in California and she is a regular shopper at the weekly farmers' market. She says that the ingredients are so superb that she now only arranges food instead of cooking it! This dish is not far off that concept and does require outstanding tomatoes.

## topping

- 40 thin asparagus spears
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1¼ lb cherry tomatoes (preferably pomodorino)
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 4 shallots, finely chopped
- 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- juice of 2 lemons
- grated zest of 1 lemon
- 1 large bunch of fresh basil, thinly sliced
- salt and pepper
- ½ lb (8 oz) Gorgonzola or dolcelatte cheese, crumbled
- basil leaves to garnish

## toasts

- 8 large slices of sourdough or French country bread, sliced at an angle
- 6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 whole garlic clove, peeled

**1** Trim the tough stalks from the asparagus, saving only the tender part of the stalks and the tips. Bring a large pan of lightly salted water to a boil. Add the baking soda, then drop in the asparagus and blanch for 1 minute. Drain and immediately refresh in cold ice water to preserve the bright-green color – otherwise, asparagus can turn an unappealing grey.

**2** Slice the cherry tomatoes in half and mix together with the garlic, shallots, olive oil, lemon juice and zest, basil, salt, and pepper.

**3** Preheat the oven to 400°F. Brush the bread with the olive oil, and toast in the oven for about 4 minutes. Rub each bruschetta with the raw garlic clove. (If preferred, the toasts can be made under a hot broiler.)

**4** Drain the asparagus and pat dry with paper towels. Place 5 asparagus spears on each slice of bread. Pour on the tomato mixture over, dividing it equally between the bruschetta, and scatter the crumbled cheese over the top. Serve immediately, garnished with basil leaves.



## divados

Buy the tomatoes a few days early and allow them to ripen in a bowl at room temperature. Please don't ever refrigerate tomatoes, as it damages their flavor. Sourdough bread has a chewy texture that's perfect for bruschetta; a white country bread would also be fine.



Serve with any of the Diva tarts or barbecue dishes for a perfect summer party.



## divadon'ts

Do not assemble the bruschetta until just before serving.