

Crispy White Bean Bites



INGREDIENTS

- 2 (14 oz.) cans of Italian Strianese brand Butter Beans, Great Northern White Beans, or other canned large white beans
- 2 Tbsp. Olive oil
- 1 rounded Tbsp. dried minced garlic
- 2 Tbsp. minced fresh rosemary leaves
- 2 Tbsp. minced fresh thyme leaves
- 1 Tbsp. garlic salt

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 425°F.

Rinse beans in a strainer and pat dry (really dry) with a clean dish towel or paper towels (let them air dry a bit if you have time). Transfer beans to a medium bowl and gently toss with olive oil, garlic, rosemary, thyme, and garlic salt.

Spread beans out on a foil-lined, rimmed baking sheet and roast, gently stirring halfway through, until the beans are golden-brown and crisp, about 30 minutes (roasting time depends on the size of beans used).

Serve immediately.

Serve Crispy Beans in a bowl as casual nibbles, or scatter over roasted vegetables or a salad.

Note: If needed, Crispy Beans can be reheated at 450°F for a few minutes to re-crisp them.

Bruschetta Pomodoro



Bruschetta is a traditional Italian staple seen in one form or another throughout Italy. The toppings vary from region to region, with versions of tomato toppings being prevalent in central and southern Italy.

It is best with garden ripe tomatoes, but I included it since it's a relatively quick, easy nibble – and can be prepared ahead.

INGREDIENTS

Bruschetta

16-18 sourdough baguette slices, about ½ inch thick

4-5 cloves garlic, peeled and sliced in half lengthwise

Appx. ⅓ cup olive oil

Pomodoro Topping

¼ cup extra virgin olive oil

2 cloves garlic, minced or mashed

1 Tbsp. balsamic or wine vinegar

Salt and pepper to taste

3 large Roma tomatoes (about ½ lb.), seeded and diced

¼ cup diced red onion

10-12 pitted Kalamata olives, coarsely chopped

12 large basil leaves, finely chopped

PREPARATION

Bruschetta

Toast baguette slices on both sides under broiler until lightly browned (watch carefully). Rub one side of each toasted slice with the cut side of garlic clove and brush with olive oil.

Pomodoro Topping

Combine oil, garlic, salt and pepper and stir to combine. Add vinegar and whisk until emulsified. Add diced tomatoes, red onion, olives and basil and toss with the vinaigrette. If possible, cover and set aside for a couple hours at room temperature, tossing occasionally to allow the flavors to marry before serving.

To serve, top Bruschetta toasts with about 2 tablespoons of Pomodoro mixture.

Sun-Dried Tomato Pesto Mushrooms



I have doubled the amount of Pesto you will need for this recipe since I always like to have some on hand for other uses – such as on pasta or pizza, or simply to spread on bruschetta, a Belgian endive leaf, a celery stick, or on crackers to munch on. Use your imagination!

INGREDIENTS

Sun-Dried Tomato Pesto

- 1 small jar (7ozs.) sun-dried tomatoes, including oil
- 1 cup pitted Kalamata olives, drained
- ¼ cup finely chopped toasted walnuts
- 1 large or 2 small cloves garlic, minced or mashed
- 1 Tbsp. minced fresh tarragon
- 1 tsp. minced fresh thyme
- ¼ cup grated parmesan cheese

PREPARATION

Puree sun-dried tomatoes, olives, walnuts and garlic in a food processor until well blended. Add tarragon, thyme and parmesan cheese and puree until all ingredients are a smooth paste. Makes about 2 cups.

Preheat oven to 400°F.

INGREDIENTS

Mushroom Caps

- 12 small-medium mushrooms
- ¼-½ lb. aged Gouda cheese, or other flavorful cheese
- 12 pieces spicy jerky, or other flavorful dried meat
- 4 tsp. grated parmesan cheese

PREPARATION

Thoroughly wipe mushrooms with a damp paper towel to clean the caps. Remove stems and discard or save for another use. Cut Gouda cheese into cubes the size of the mushroom cavities. Cut jerky into ¾ inch pieces.

To assemble, place cheese cube in each mushroom cavity, and top with a heaping teaspoon or so of pesto mixture. Insert a sliver of jerky (I use Krave Sweet Chipotle) into the pesto, and sprinkle a little grated parmesan on top.

Place mushrooms in a shallow baking dish and bake about 10 minutes, until mushrooms are slightly browned and soft.

Serve hot - and be sure to provide cocktail napkins.