

# Food for the Soul



Gathering around the table, hosting, bringing friends and family into my home, and feeding them a delicious meal is what fills my soul. It's how I show love to others. Nothing makes me happier than preparing a tasty, simple meal that I know didn't break the bank, is impressive and elegant, and easy to prepare. One of those recipes is my homemade bruschetta, which can be great as an appetizer or side dish at any potluck or party.

If you are not comfortable hosting in your home, maybe take a step of faith and invite a new friend and her family over for dinner to see how much of a blessing it can be. Acts 2:46 says, "They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts." Remember, it doesn't have to be a lavishly gourmet meal, and your house does not have to be immaculately clean. The kids might run around like crazy people, but that's okay. Just be you, whatever it looks like. I truly believe you will be surprised at how simple and easy it can be. The Lord will bless your willingness to open your home.

## BRUSCHETTA

By: Brandi Carson

### Ingredients:

4-5 medium vine ripened tomatoes, finely diced	1 bottle balsamic vinegar (the cheap kind is fine because it is being reduced)
Large bunch of fresh basil, destemmed and finely shredded	Salt and pepper
1 large 2 medium garlic cloves, minced	Baguette
Olive oil	Butter, melted

### Directions:

1. First you will need to make a balsamic reduction. You will want to have your vent on as the smell can be overwhelming. Pour the entire bottle of balsamic vinegar into a small saucepan and heat over medium heat. Bring to a boil and let simmer for 15-20 minutes, checking on it periodically. Swirl the pan every once in a while to check the thickness. The amount of liquid will reduce to less than half the original. What you are looking for is a thickened liquid that will coat the back of a spoon, stay on the spoon, and be the consistency of syrup once cooled. You need to make sure it doesn't get too thick while hot or it will be like caramel when it's cooled down. Sometimes, I cool it to check the consistency. If it's too runny, I will just cook it a little more.
2. In a medium bowl, combine diced tomatoes, basil, and garlic. Drizzle a couple tablespoons of olive oil over the top. Salt and pepper to taste, then drizzle about a tablespoon of the reduced balsamic over the top. Mix well and set aside.
3. Preheat your oven to 400 degrees F.
4. Slice baguettes  $\frac{1}{3}$ " thick at an angle. Arrange them on a sheet pan in a single layer. With a basting brush, coat both sides of sliced baguettes with melted butter. Salt and pepper to taste.
5. Bake about 4-5 minutes until the bottoms are slightly brown. Then flip all the slices over and bake an additional 4-5 minutes until the other side is slightly browned.
6. To serve, take a baguette and put a spoonful of the bruschetta on top. Drizzle some of the balsamic reduction over the top. Enjoy.