



## eggplant & butternut squash bruschetta

We all know what not to bring a hostess: fresh-cut flowers, a bathroom scale, a re-gifted plastic pink flamingo. However, as the hostess, do you know what, apart from refills, you can give your guests? How about that welcoming, warm-and-fuzzy feeling that comes with delicious eats? This bruschetta will do all the work for you. Crusty French bread is rubbed with garlic, toasted and then topped with smooth, creamy ricotta and a chunky mixture of caramelized eggplant and butternut squash. Easily prepared in advance and assembled just before guests arrive, nothing says "gracious gourmet" more than a tray of these tasty bruschetta.

YIELD: 26 PIECES

## ingredients

### Toasted Garlic Bread

- 25 slices of French bread,  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch thick
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large garlic clove
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp kosher salt

### Eggplant & Butternut Squash Topping

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 small red onion, diced
- 2 cups diced, unpeeled eggplant
- 2 cups diced butternut squash
- 1 large garlic clove, minced
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp honey
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup ricotta cheese

## directions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Place bread slices on a non-stick baking sheet. Brush one side with olive oil. Cut the garlic clove in half and rub the cut half on the oiled bread. Sprinkle bread slices evenly with salt. Bake 4 minutes, flip slices and bake 3 minutes more. Remove from oven and set aside.

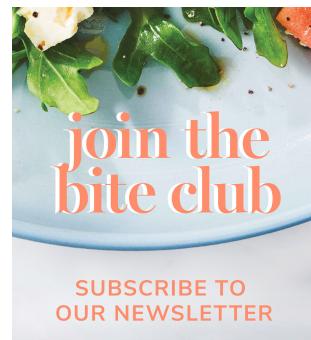
2. For the topping, in a large skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add onions, cooking for 2 minutes. Add eggplant and butternut squash, continuing to cook for 8 minutes, stirring frequently. Add garlic and continue cooking for 30 seconds. Add balsamic vinegar, honey, salt and pepper, cooking 2 minutes more. Remove from heat.

3. To assemble, spread each toasted slice of bread with a spoonful of ricotta cheese topped with eggplant/butternut squash mixture. Serve immediately.

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