

Summer Garden Bruschetta Salad with Chicken by Chef Josh



Plan Z Phase: This is a Z2 (ZReduction) recipe contributed by Chef Josh.

With gardens and farms in full swing here in the Midwest its very easy to find local produce at local stores and farmers markets. I've even embarked on my first patio garden, which consists of a few basil varieties, Tuscan kale, Cherokee Purple tomatoes, Sweet 100's cherry tomatoes, as well as some baby lettuce, green beans, and broccoli rabe. While the harvests haven't been huge, its been a learning adventure on how to grow and cultivate the land to produce great produce. It's a difficult task (especially on a patio), so hats off to you farmers and pro gardeners out there.

My Grandpa told me that during the summer months he and my Grandma basically live off of their garden and hardly ever feel the need to eat meat. My Grandpa is 86 and still cultivates a large enough crop for his wife of 53 years, their kids, and many of their grand-kids. In other words, he is a stud.

I call this salad my "bruschetta" salad because it reminds me of

a tomato mixture I would create to top toasted bread as an appetizer at one of the first restaurants I worked in. You'll recognize it, because its basically on every menu these days.

So while "Bruschetta" actually means "grilled bread rubbed with garlic" here, in this recipe, it simply means "delicious tomato salad with balsamic."

This recipe is a great one for the summer. You could grill the chicken if you'd like, and then it's simply chopping the rest of the ingredients and tossing them together with a touch of balsamic vinegar, salt and pepper. It would be equally delicious with salmon.

Servings: Serves 2

Ingredients:

- 2 skinless chicken breasts (6 oz each)
- 2 ripe Roma tomatoes, quartered and diced
- 1/2 of a cucumber, peeled, seeded and diced
- 1/2 of a green pepper, diced
- 1/4 of a small red onion, julienned
- 10-15 small basil leaves, torn
- 2 scallions (tops and bottoms), sliced on a bias thinly
- 1 cup of baby spinach (or more if you choose)
- 1 garlic clove, smashed
- 1/4 cup of chicken stock
- dried herbs like rosemary and basil for example
- salt and pepper
- 1 Tbl balsamic vinegar
- extra virgin olive oil spray

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

For the Chicken:

Heat a pan, spray well with extra virgin olive oil spray (I use organic) and then sear with the chicken breast "skin side down." This is easy to tell because one side is smooth, and the other is rough and also has the tenderloin attached to it. The smooth side is the one that had the skin on it. While it is searing season with salt and pepper, add some dried herbs like rosemary and basil, and let it cook on medium high until it is nice and brown. Flip the chicken, add the smashed garlic, and deglaze the pan with 1/4 cup chicken stock. (Deglaze for those who don't already know, is where you add a cold liquid to a hot pan to remove all the brown food residue stuck to the bottom of the pan to make a sauce.) Put the pan with the chicken in the oven for 15 minutes (make sure it is oven proof or transfer it to an oven proof dish).

For the Bruschetta Salad:

Simply toss the rest of the ingredients together with 2 squirts of extra virgin olive oil spray, and the balsamic vinegar. When the chicken is finished cooking you could add the roasted, smashed garlic to the salad as well. Season the salad with salt and pepper to taste, and serve next to your roasted chicken breasts! A serving size for Z2 (ZReduction) is one chicken breast, one cup of veggies and unlimited salad greens.

Enjoy!

Chef Josh