

LIFESTYLE

TASTE FOOD

A reimagined caprese

By Lynda Balslev

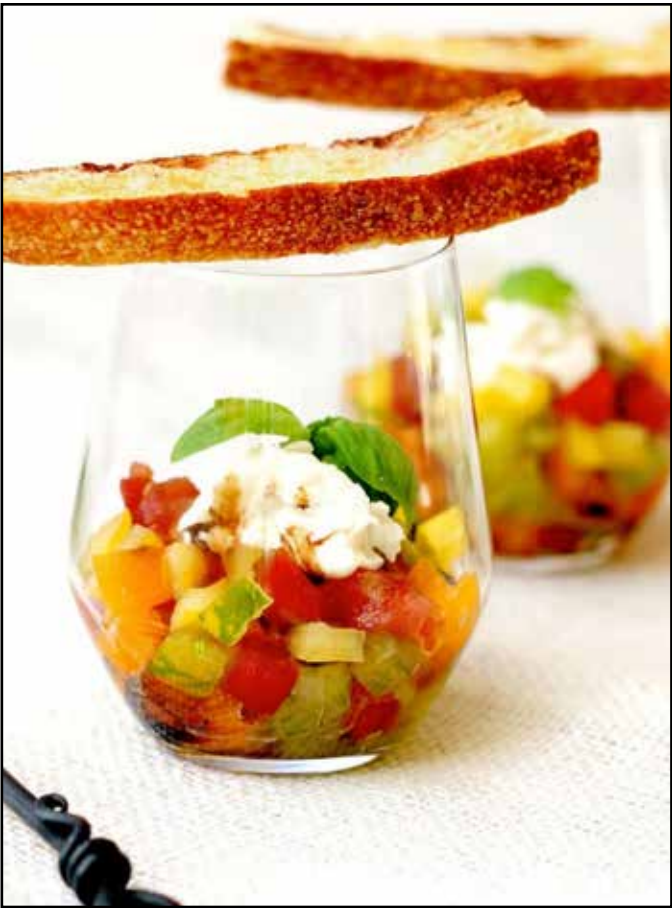
This recipe celebrates the abundance of summer tomatoes in a dish that’s as visually appealing as it is flavorful. Inspired by the classic ingredients of an Italian caprese salad -- juicy tomatoes, creamy mozzarella and fragrant basil -- it reimagines the familiar combination with a little knife work and thoughtful layering. The result is a vibrant appetizer served in a glass that’s easy to assemble, simple to serve and fun to eat.

Think of it as a savory summer parfait: a colorful medley of diced tomatoes topped with a generous dollop of buffalo mozzarella, ribbons of fresh basil and a drizzle of rich balsamic reduction. A crisp crostini plank completes the presentation, doubling as both a garnish and a handy utensil for scooping up the tomatoes and soaking up their sweet, flavorful juices.

TOMATO TARTARE CAPRESE

Active time: 30 minutes
Total time: 30 minutes, plus cooling time
Yield: Serves 6 to 8

Syrup:
2/3 cup balsamic vinegar
1 garlic clove, lightly smashed
1 tablespoon lemon juice
Pinch of salt and freshly ground



Tomato Tartare Caprese. LYNDA BALSLEV / TASTEFOOD

black pepper

CROSTINI:
6 to 8 slices of baguette, sliced on the diagonal, about 4 inches in length and 1/4-inch thick
Extra-virgin olive oil
1 large garlic clove, lightly smashed
Kosher salt

TOMATOES:
1 1/2 to 2 pounds assorted tomatoes, seeded, cut into 1/4-inch dice
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, plus extra for garnish
1 pinch sugar (optional)

2 fresh buffalo mozzarella rounds, each about 4 ounces
6 to 8 basil leaves

FOR THE SYRUP:
Place the vinegar, garlic, lemon juice, salt and pepper in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil and simmer until reduced by about half and slightly syrupy, 3 to 4 minutes, stirring occasionally. Discard the garlic clove. Transfer the syrup to a bowl and cool to room temperature.

FOR THE CROSTINI:
Heat the oven broiler or grill. Lightly brush the baguette slices with olive oil. Rub each slice with the garlic clove and sprinkle with a pinch of salt. Arrange in one layer on a baking tray and broil until lightly golden on both sides, turning once, or grill until lightly charred on both sides. Set aside.

FOR THE TOMATOES:
Combine the tomatoes, oil, salt and black pepper in a bowl. Gently stir to combine. Taste for seasoning. If desired, add a pinch of sugar.

Divide the tomatoes evenly between serving glasses or small bowls. Tear the mozzarella into 6 to 8 chunks, then place a chunk in each glass over the tomatoes. Drizzle with 1 to 2 teaspoons balsamic syrup.

To chiffonade the basil, stack the leaves, roll them lengthwise and thinly slice the roll. Sprinkle the basil over the tomatoes. Garnish with additional black pepper and serve with the crostini.

Lynda Balslev is an award-winning writer, cookbook author, and recipe developer based in northern California. Visit TasteFood at TasteFoodblog.com.

Wife wouldn’t be counted among musician’s biggest fans

DEAR ABBY: My wife and I have been married 31 years. We have a great marriage. We work from home, so we spend pretty much every minute together and enjoy each other’s company so much that it isn’t an issue. That said, I will also share that I’m a basement musician. It’s my hobby. I play guitar and sing. In the past, I have appeared in bands as well as solo formats. I’m also a pretty good songwriter. I have written a number of songs, including several about my wife and the love we share.

My challenge is that my wife isn’t very musical. She can go days at a time without listening to any music at all. In the big scheme of things, this might not sound like a huge deal. I am cool with it. But in all our 31 years together, she has never asked me to play anything for her -- none of the songs I have written for her or covers of famous songs.

I have pointed this fact out to her more than once, hoping to drop a hint that, even if she doesn’t appreciate music, asking me to sing one of those songs for her would make me feel like she appreciated the effort and thought. When friends and family ask me to play them, she always says she likes them, but the requests never come from her. Am I asking too much to expect it, or should I just let it go and stop writing them? -- STILL WAITING IN VIRGINIA

DEAR STILL WAITING: Face it -- the woman you married 31 years ago has never been a music lover, regardless of who the composer is. However, writing songs about your feelings is a form of free expression, and I don’t think you should quit doing it if it’s satisfying for you.

DEAR ABBY: I



DEAR ABBY
Abigail Van Buren

am a single, retired female. I have a personal side business that keeps me quite busy, and I’m blessed to have many friends. I am also active in community and church events. My issue is that a lot of my friends who are inactive and retired invite me to dinners, the theater and parties, sometimes at the very last minute. Then they become annoyed when I decline. They also endlessly keep me tied up on the phone or on text messages with utter nonsense.

I am a people-pleaser and feel bad when I must decline an invitation. I have proper manners and know etiquette, but this has become frustrating and annoying. I have endlessly responded with, “I would love to go, but I need advance notice,” to no avail. What to do? -- PER- PLEXED IN PENNSYLVANIA

DEAR PER- PLEXED: Because you are a people-pleaser and want to offend no one, continue responding as you already do, “I’d love to go, but I need more advance notice than you have given me.” While you’re at it, it isn’t rude to be too busy to chat if someone calls at an inopportune time. (You can always screen your calls if they are oppressive, and take your time responding to their texts.)

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

From our HISTORY Sponsored by



‘Twin boys, trapped, die in burning barn’

Compiled by
Brady Cloud
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Excerpted stories in Crawford County newspaper archives

100 YEARS AGO
July 31, 1926
Raymond and Roy Matson, three years old, twin sons of Mr. and Mrs. Wilson Matson, were burned to death at 9:30 o’clock this morning when fire destroyed the barn at the Matson place just north of Atlas powder plant at Kirkwood. The boys, it is believed, were playing with matches. In the barn were several bales of hay. The blaze apparently shot up rapidly and the boys were trapped. A big sliding door blocked their way out.
The new clubhouse of the Pittsburg Country Club we turned over to the officials of the club this morning by the general contractors, Sanford & Austin. Announcement was made that the new clubhouse will be formally opened next Friday. The plumbing contractor has some work to do and the electric work will require a day or more. The new clubhouse, probably the most modern thing in country club structures, is of brick with a

Pittsburg tile roof.
The second largest class of petitioners for final naturalization papers ever examined in this county is anticipated for the November term of court in Pittsburg, Sam Webb, clerk of the district court, said today. Dates for receiving petitions for final papers will be Friday and Saturday, Aug. 6 and 7, Mr. Webb reported this morning, following a long distance telephone conversation with C. A. Ramsey of Kansas City, naturalization examiner. Mr. Ramsey returned yesterday from an outing in Idaho of several weeks.

50 YEARS AGO
July 31, 1976
GIRARD - The two county sanitary landfills will continue to operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the Crawford County Commissioners announced at Friday’s commission meeting. The county’s two landfills (one southwest of Girard and the other several miles north of Frontenac) have been operating on a 24-hour basis since coming under county control July 1, but plans were to reduce the number of hours.
TOPEKA - Bill Rob-

erts, consumer affairs representative from the State Insurance Commissioner’s office, will be in Pittsburg Aug. 4 to answer any questions concerning insurance. The stop in Pittsburg is one of many for Roberts throughout the year as he tours the state representing the State Insurance Commissioner. Roberts will be at the District Court building. Fourth and Pine in Pittsburg, from 2 to 4 p.m. Aug. 4, or until all questions have been answered.
Crawford County 4-H agent, Bev Kiehl, has announced the judging results from an arts and crafts pre-fair held Wednesday and Thursday at the Sekan hospitality room in Girard. More than 400 entries were reviewed by a panel of judges during the two-day event and ribbons were awarded following conference-type critiques for the young craftsmen.
25 YEARS AGO
July 31, 2001
GIRARD - With no public comment, Girard City Council members Monday night passed an \$8 million budget for 2002. Even though the budget is about \$2.3 million more than the 2001 budget, the city’s

mill levy will decrease from \$40.66 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation to \$39.07 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. However, the city’s total assessed valuation is expected to increase from \$11.7 million to \$12.3 million.
ARMA - Marcel Normand remembers standing for a parade with his family in front of his father’s store, watching the American Legion color guard, bands and floats pass by. When a truck with politicians came by, he recognized one and, with a smile, she remembered him. “Hi, Marcel,” Joan Finney said, waving to him. Later, Finney would stop and chat with the former government teacher, not about politics, but life in general.
Local school district administrators agree that a statewide teaching shortage is making things tough, but some superintendents said there are advantages to living in a rural area. “I do think it’s a factor,” said Marvin “Bud” Bualle, superintendent of schools for USD 246, Northeast. “All the people we talk to want the small-town atmosphere.”

SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING:☆☆☆☆☆

	5			4		8		
3				9			1	
9	7	6	3					5
		3	5		9			
				6				
			1		4	6		
5					6	9	3	1
	1			7				8
		8		5			7	

7/31

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PREVIOUS SOLUTION

4	9	5	2	7	6	1	8	3
3	1	6	5	9	8	7	2	4
2	8	7	1	3	4	6	9	5
1	5	4	9	2	3	8	6	7
9	2	3	6	8	7	5	4	1
7	6	8	4	5	1	9	3	2
6	3	1	7	4	9	2	5	8
8	7	2	3	6	5	4	1	9
5	4	9	8	1	2	3	7	6

HOW TO PLAY:

Each row, column and set of 3-by-3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 through 9 without repetition.