

## ITALIAN BRAAI BRUSCHETTA

Italy is a very pleasant place to visit, and I also like their food. The climate is agreeable and similar to South Africa, and many of the ingredients I like to braai with in South Africa are also widely available there. Their flag is beautiful – almost as photogenic as our own South African flag – and there are some famous Italian meals mimicking the colours of their flag, the Caprese salad of tomato, sweet basil and buffalo mozzarella probably being the best known. This braai snack, firmly based on the original Italian version, has the same famous tricolour scheme and more. But the real difference is that we're braaiing tomatoes and adding some fire-toast flavour to the bread as well to end up with bruschetta that I honestly think is better than the original Italian.

### WHAT YOU NEED

(feeds 6–8 as a snack)

1 French baguette (sliced)  
200 g feta cheese (crumbled)

### FOR THE OLIVE OIL SPREAD

4 garlic cloves (crushed and chopped)  
few sprigs of fresh thyme  
1 tsp salt  
2 tots olive oil

### FOR THE TOMATO SALAD

500 g cherry tomatoes (roughly chopped)  
1 tot olive oil  
1 tot balsamic vinegar  
salt and pepper (to taste)  
bunch of fresh basil (roughly chopped)

### FOR THE TOMATO SKEWERS

500 g cherry, Mediterranean cocktail or Roma tomatoes (the idea is that they should skewer whole onto the skewer)  
skewers

### WHAT TO DO

1. Make the olive oil spread. Place the garlic, thyme and salt into your mortar, and use the pestle to make a smooth paste. Add the olive oil and mix well. If you don't have a pestle and mortar, chop everything together as finely as possible and add the olive oil. Now lather all of the bread slices with the olive oil spread on one side.
2. Make the tomato salad by mixing the tomatoes, olive oil and balsamic vinegar in a bowl. Add salt, pepper and basil to taste.

3. Place the whole tomatoes on the skewers and braai over hot coals until roasted and charred. They should just start to burst and crack a little bit.

4. Lightly toast the bread slices on a grid over medium-hot coals with the oiled side facing down.

5. Build your braaied bruschetta by starting with the toasted bread, oiled side up, topping with tomato salad, then feta cheese and ending with the roasted tomatoes from the skewers.

AND ...

Use different coloured and types of tomatoes for the skewers to add a bit of variety to the bruschetta.