

Crostini with rocket, pine nuts and sliced beef

To make a vegetarian version, simply top the crostini with a mixture of red, yellow and black tomatoes. Cut the tomatoes into small dice, marinade in a touch of olive oil and season with salt and pepper.

Serves 4 (as a main)

2 rump steaks (180–200 g/6½–7 oz each)
100 g (3½ oz) rocket (arugula)
30 g (¼ cup) pine nuts
50 g (2 oz) parmesan
1 large ciabatta loaf (alternatively 1 large baguette)
4 tablespoons olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
1 sprig thyme
1½ tablespoons balsamic vinegar
1 teaspoon honey
Salt, freshly ground pepper
2 garlic cloves
2 tablespoons canola oil

Take the steaks out of the refrigerator and leave to rest at room temperature for at least 30 minutes before frying. Pick through and wash the rocket. Dry-roast the pine nuts in a pan until golden brown, stirring occasionally. Combine with the rocket in a bowl. Shave the parmesan and set aside.

Preheat the oven to 220°C (425°F), using the grill (broiler) function, and line a baking tray with baking paper. Slice the ciabatta bread and arrange the slices on the tray. Drizzle the bread with a little olive oil. Transfer the tray to the preheated oven and toast the bread until crisp, about 5–8 minutes. Turn once after 3–4 minutes.

Rinse the thyme, pat dry and finely chop the leaves. Whisk the balsamic vinegar, honey and olive oil to make a dressing. Season with thyme, salt and pepper. Toss half of the dressing with the rocket and pine nut mixture.

Allow the toasted ciabatta to cool briefly. Halve the garlic clove and rub the toasted bread with the cut clove. Arrange the bread slices on a large serving platter. Top with a little rocket salad each.

Pat the steaks dry and season with salt. Heat the canola oil in a frying pan over medium to high heat. Add the steaks and sear for 1½–2½ minutes per side, depending on thickness. Season with pepper on both sides. Wrap the steaks in aluminium foil and set aside to rest for 5 minutes. Slice thinly and arrange on top of the crostini. Drizzle with the remaining dressing and serve garnished with shaved parmesan.

***New York Capital of Food* by Lisa Nieschlag and Lars Wentrup (Murdoch Books, £20). Photography by Lisa Nieschlag.**