Caprese Sandwich with Pesto Aioli

Makes: 4 servings
Prep Time: 15 minutes Cook Time: 5 minutes
Total Time: 20 minutes

Ingredients

- 6 tbsp basil pesto, homemade or store-bought
- 2 tbsp mayonnaise
- 4 focaccia squares (about 4 inches each), split in half
- Extra virgin olive oil, for brushing and drizzling
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and halved
- 8 ounces fresh mozzarella, sliced and patted dry
- 2 Roma tomatoes, sliced
- 1 cup baby arugula
- 12 large fresh basil leaves
- Balsamic glaze
- Flaky sea salt
- Freshly cracked black pepper

Instructions

Preheat a grill pan or skillet over medium heat.

In a small bowl, stir together the basil pesto and mayonnaise until smooth.

Lightly brush the cut sides of the focaccia with olive oil. Toast until lightly golden and crisp. While still warm, gently rub the cut sides with the cut garlic clove to infuse the bread with a subtle garlic flavor.

Spread the pesto aioli over the toasted sides of the bread.

Layer the bottom halves with the mozzarella and tomatoes. Season the tomatoes with flaky sea salt and freshly cracked black pepper. Top with the arugula and fresh basil leaves.

Drizzle with balsamic glaze and a little extra virgin olive oil. Top with the remaining bread and serve immediately.

Chef's Notes:

- Fresh mozzarella packed in water has the best flavor and texture. Pat it dry with paper towels before assembling the sandwiches to prevent excess moisture.
- For an extra-special sandwich, substitute creamy burrata for the mozzarella.
- If using large heirloom tomatoes, slice them about 1/4-inch thick and lightly season each slice with flaky sea salt before assembling.
- These sandwiches are wonderful served with kettle chips, fresh fruit, or a simple green salad.
- If packing for a picnic, wait to add the balsamic glaze until just before serving to keep the bread crisp.