

Tomato Bread

(from author Jerry Traunfeld's book, the Herbal Kitchen)

Ingredients

¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

About ½ loaf of chewy (not fluffy) Italian-style bread, fresh or day-old, sliced ½" thick

3 cloves garlic, finely chopped

Small bunch fresh basil

3 ripe juicy tomatoes (1 to ¼ pounds), sliced 3/8" thick

¾ teaspoon kosher salt

1 teaspoon thyme leaves

Instructions

Preheat the oven to 400° F.

Spread 1 tablespoon of the olive oil on the bottom of a gratin dish about 8 x 10 inches in size.

Cut the crusts off the bread and slice it into rough pieces about 2 x 2 inches. Fit the bread into a tight mosaic in the bottom of the dish to create a single layer of bread with no spaces. Drizzle with another 2 tablespoons of the oil and sprinkle with the garlic. Tear the basil leaves over the bread.

Arrange the tomatoes in rows, overlapping them so they all fit. Drizzle with the remaining 2 tablespoons oil and sprinkle with the salt and thyme. Bake the dish for 25 to 30 minutes, It's done when the underside of the bread is lightly toasted when you lift a corner to peek. Allow it to cool for about 10 minutes and serve it warm, scooped from the dish with a large spoon.