

My daily bread

Give your toast a top-up with these tasty recipes

RAQUEL PELZEL

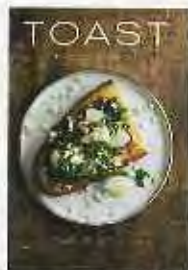


world, you may start putting everything on top of toasted bread, even apple pie!

Did it all start with innocent avocado toasts, an import from Australia? Beans on toast from England? The Malaysian kaya toast topped with coconut jam? Does it matter? Home cooks and chefs are turning bread heaped with toppings into a way to offer a new and elevated take on a casual meal.

So a toast to toasts: may yours be crisp and satisfying with every bite, and may the crumbs always leave a lasting impression ■

Raquel Pelzel is an American food writer. She has written for Saveur, The Wall Street Journal and Epicurious. Toast is her first solo cookbook



Toast (Phaidon, £14.95) is out now. To buy it for £12.95, inc p&p, call 0845 271 2135 or visit thesundaytimes.co.uk/bookshop

Welcome to the modern world of toast, where the bread is flame-kissed, crisped in the toaster or griddled, then finished with a heap of seasonally inspired toppings. Think of it as a sophisticated evolution of the sandwich and an upgrade from small bites such as bruschetta and crostini: as good for breakfast as it is for dessert, as chic for company as it is simple for dinner for one.

Toast can be savoury and meaty, calling on serious proteins — a barbecued leg of lamb, or shatteringly crisp, honey-glazed fried chicken piled on top of the charred bread. It can also rely on more garden-inspired toppings — a luscious tomato and avocado salad, or a blistered chilli romesco sauce and sautéed mustard greens. Toast is infinitely amendable, and once you begin to explore its

Roast beef, rémoulade and fried onion smorrebrod

Hot/cold, crispy/creamy, tangy/rich: these are the dualities of the classic smorrebrod roast beef and rémoulade toast with crackling fried onions.

Rémoulade, which is similar to tartare sauce, gets a yellow tint from a dash of turmeric or curry powder. I go with the former to keep the flavour more neutral, but for a taste of the subcontinent, swap in curry powder instead.

Serves: 4
(with leftover rémoulade)

FOR THE RÉMOULADE

- 120ml mayonnaise
- 1 medium shallot, very finely chopped
- 1 tbsp grainy mustard
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 tbsp finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 1 tbsp drained capers, rinsed and roughly chopped
- 1 tbsp roughly chopped cornichon pickles
- ¼ tsp ground turmeric or curry powder

FOR THE TOAST

- Extra-virgin olive oil, for the bread
- Four 2cm-thick slices of rye or pumpernickel bread
- Approx 1 litre rapeseed oil
- 4 tbsp plain flour
- 1 large yellow onion, cut crosswise into slices 0.5cm thick and separated into rings
- 12 slices of roast beef
- Roughly chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

1. In a small bowl, whisk together the mayonnaise, shallot, mustard, lemon juice, parsley, capers, pickles, turmeric and salt. Cover and refrigerate.

2. Heat 2 tbsp of oil or butter in a large frying pan. Place the bread in the pan and set a large, heat-safe plate or cake pan on top of the bread. Cook for 2-3 minutes, until the bread is golden brown. Flip the bread over. Sprinkle the toasted side with salt, then continue to brown the second side for 1½-2 minutes longer.

3. Pour enough oil into a medium pan to come up 5cm-7cm. Heat the oil over a medium-high heat until it reaches 180C on an instant-read thermometer. In a medium bowl, combine the flour, ¼ tsp salt and ¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper. Add the onion rings and toss to coat.

4. Fry the onion rings in batches, adding a handful at a time, turning with chopsticks or a slotted spoon, until golden brown and crisp, for 4-5 minutes. Let the oil heat back up to 180C before adding the next batch. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the onions to a plate lined with paper towels and season with a pinch of salt.

5. Top each toast with 3 slices of roast beef, a spoonful or two of rémoulade and a heap of fried onions. Sprinkle with parsley and serve.

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Cumin-roasted carrots and muhammara toast

This toast is a homage to a recipe from the chef Dan Kluger: a cumin-roasted carrot and avocado salad that took New York by storm. The carrots are roasted with cumin and honey, then heaped over muhammara, a tangy walnut spread made with sweet-tart pomegranate molasses. The leftover muhammara makes an excellent dip for veggies or chips.

Serves: 4
(with leftover muhammara)

CARROTS AND MUHAMMARA
6 medium carrots, halved lengthwise
3 tbsps extra-virgin olive oil

1 tbsps honey
1 tsp ground cumin
2 large red bell peppers
1 clove of garlic, unpeeled
100g walnuts, toasted
1½ tbsps pomegranate molasses
¼ tsp smoked or hot paprika
¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE TOAST
Four 2cm-thick slices of sesame-seeded bread
Extra-virgin olive oil, for the bread
½ a lemon
Honey, for serving
2 tbsps salted, roasted sunflower seeds
3 tbsps finely chopped fresh mint leaves

1. Position one oven rack in the upper third and a second in the lower third of the oven, and heat to 200C. Line a baking sheet with foil.

2. Arrange the carrots on the baking sheet and drizzle with 2 tbsps olive oil and honey. Sprinkle with the cumin and ½ tsp salt and use your hands to roll the carrots in the spices, ensuring each carrot is evenly coated. Roast for 15 minutes. Shake the pan and roast until golden brown and tender, for 10-15 minutes longer. Remove from the oven and set aside.

3. Heat the grill to high. Arrange the peppers and garlic on the same foil-lined baking sheet and grill on the upper rack, turning occasionally until the peppers are charred and blackened on all sides, and the garlic clove is golden brown (12-15 minutes in total). Transfer the vegetables to a medium bowl. Cover well and allow to steam for 20 minutes.

4. Once the peppers are cool enough to handle, peel off the skin and remove the stem and seeds. Peel the garlic and place the clove in a food processor with the roasted peppers, walnuts, pomegranate molasses, the remaining 1 tbsp olive oil and 1 tsp salt, the paprika and pepper. Pulse until combined and chunky (five to six one-second pulses).

5. Drizzle one side of each slice with oil or spread with softened butter, then season with salt. Position an oven rack in the top third of the oven and heat the grill to high. Grill until golden brown. Flip the bread slices, and toast the other side until golden brown.

6. To serve, spread each toast with a generous few spoonfuls of the muhammara and top with carrots. Finish with a squeeze of lemon juice, a pinch of flaky salt and a drizzle of honey. Sprinkle with the sunflower seeds and mint.

Tuna melt toast with olive salsa

I'm always curious about what chefs make in their home kitchens when they're starving. A bowl of cereal? Scrambled eggs? Doctored ramen? This toast is from the Australian chef-owner Bill Granger, who has nearly a dozen restaurants in Australia, Japan, Britain, South Korea and Hawaii. He loves the tuna-melt toast straight from the oven while the cheese is still lovely and oozy, and says it's way better (and faster) than even dialling for pizza.

Serves: 4

FOR THE OLIVE SALSA AND TUNA

1 small bunch of fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped
3 spring onions, light green and white parts only, finely chopped
35g pitted green olives, roughly chopped
1 tbsps extra-virgin olive oil
Juice of ½ lemon
225g oil-packed tinned tuna, drained and flaked
4 marinated artichoke hearts, drained and thinly sliced
35g shredded fresh mozzarella cheese (preferably buffalo)
25g grated hard mozzarella cheese (preferably not fresh)
1 tsp freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE TOAST

2cm-thick slices of sourdough bread
Pinch of red-pepper flakes



1. To make the olive salsa and tuna, mix the parsley, spring onions, olives, olive oil and lemon juice together in a small bowl. Taste and season with salt if needed. In a separate bowl, stir together the tuna, artichoke hearts, both mozzarellas and black pepper until everything is evenly mixed.

2. Heat the grill to high and arrange the bread on a foil-lined, rimmed baking sheet. Toast the bread lightly on both sides, 1-2 minutes per side, until golden brown. Top each toast with the tuna mixture and sprinkle with red-pepper flakes. Grill until the cheese is melted and bubbling, for 2-3 minutes. Serve hot, topped with the salsa.

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Roasted tomato and feta cream toast

Out-of-season tomatoes are generally a sad lot, but roasting them initiates an alchemic series of events in which the essence of the tomatoes concentrates and sweetens, and they become super-juicy. Paired with a rich and creamy feta sauce, this toast is pure decadence. Crushing the herbs between your fingers before sprinkling releases their essential oils — and makes a big difference when it comes to the freshest, brightest taste.

Serves: 4

FOR THE ROASTED TOMATO AND FETA CREAM TOPPING

4 plum tomatoes, cored and halved lengthwise

½ tsp sweet paprika

½ tsp freshly ground black pepper

1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

75g crumbled feta cheese

3 tbsp plain Greek yogurt

2 tbsp mayonnaise

1 medium clove of garlic, very finely chopped

½ tsp dried oregano

FOR THE TOAST

Four 2 cm-thick slices of country-style bread

Extra-virgin olive oil for the bread, plus extra for drizzling



1. Heat the oven to 190C. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.

2. Place the tomatoes, cut side up, on the baking sheet. In a small bowl, mix together the paprika, pepper and ¼ tsp salt. Drizzle the tomatoes with the oil and sprinkle with the paprika mixture. Roast for 50 minutes to 1 hour, until the juices are

bubbling and the tomatoes are tender and browned on the bottom. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool.

3. In a medium bowl, stir together the feta, yogurt, mayonnaise, garlic, oregano and ¼ tsp salt.

4. Drizzle one side of each slice of bread with oil or spread with

softened butter, then season with salt. Position an oven rack in the top third of the oven and heat the grill to high. Toast until golden, then flip the bread and grill the other side until golden brown.

5. To serve, top each toast with a generous spoonful of the feta cream, then add a tomato, drizzle with olive oil and

sprinkle with a pinch of flaky salt and a few grinds of pepper.

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