



PUREA DE FAVE CON CROSTINI

Pureed Fava Beans with Crostini

Shelling fresh fava beans is a labor of love. Removing the hull and peeling back the outer skin of each bean takes time, patience, and a soulful respect for the cultivation of this generous bean. There is a reason it has been a Mediterranean mainstay for centuries. For me, preparing fava beans is a kind of meditation. I put on some music, pour myself a glass of wine, and ready the beans. It is the way Saro taught me. Once prepared, these crostini are a sublime delicacy, earthy and inspired.

- 2 pounds of fresh fava beans, still in the pod
- 2¼ teaspoons sea salt
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ small white onion, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh mint, chopped
- ½ teaspoon lemon juice
- Sea salt and freshly cracked black pepper to taste
- 1 baguette or loaf of artisanal bread
- 1 clove garlic to rub on the bread
- Thinly sliced pecorino cheese for garnish (optional)

Shuck the fava beans (remove the beans from their bulky pods). Fill a large saucepan half full of water and add 2 teaspoons of salt. Bring the water to a boil. Meanwhile, put a few cups of ice in a medium mixing bowl and fill with water.

Add the beans to the boiling water and cook for 2 to 3 minutes, *no more*. Turn off the heat and strain the beans into the ice-water bath. (Be careful to save a bit of the water that the beans were boiled in.) Let the beans sit in the ice bath for 1 to 2 minutes. Drain the ice water from the pan. Remove the outer coating of each bean, pinching the end and slipping the bean out of the skin.

In a medium skillet, heat the olive oil and add the onion. Cook until translucent, about 2 minutes. Add the beans, the saved bean water, and

the remaining salt. Stir and allow to simmer for 5 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat, stir in the mint, and add the lemon juice. Put the mixture into a food processor and blend until creamy smooth, streaming in a little more olive oil if necessary to make it creamier. Add salt and pepper to taste. Set aside.

Slice the bread into 1-inch-thick slices. Grill or broil until lightly golden. Remove, rub with a clove of garlic, and brush with olive oil. Top each piece of bread with a hearty heap of fava bean puree. Garnish with a slice of pecorino, if desired. Top with the remaining mint.

Makes a dozen pieces.

