

Pan-Seared Tomato and Rosemary Artichoke Sandwich

I hope I can unite two types of people with this sandwich: those who dislike fresh tomatoes and those who love them. I'll admit, I'm in the former group. Sometimes I can handle a sliced tomato on a sandwich, but I usually end up picking it out halfway through. The tomatoes in this sandwich are cooked quickly in a hot skillet. They're in there long enough to lose the raw flavor, but not so long you feel bad about cooking your perfectly vine-ripened tomatoes—and I do mean perfectly ripened. This sandwich showcases summer tomatoes in all their glory. If so-delicious-they-make-you-wanna-cry red and juicy tomatoes are not available, consider another sandwich. You make the call.

An optional but crazy-good addition to this sandwich is a balsamic reduction. If you've never made a balsamic reduction, you're in for a treat. Fancy restaurants use it all the freakin' time, but it only requires one ingredient: balsamic vinegar. It can be a little tricky, because if you reduce it too much it just tastes burned or it starts to caramelize and will be hard as a rock when it cools. But keep an eye on it and you'll be fine. It's the perfect thing to drizzle over lightly cooked summer veggies, so keep it in mind for other meals.



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Makes 1 sandwich

step 1 If using, make the balsamic vinegar reduction and set it aside. This can be made ahead of time.

step 2 Heat the oil in a sauté pan and add the rosemary and artichokes. Sprinkle with a pinch of salt and cook over medium heat for a few minutes until the edges start to turn golden. Don't worry if they break up a bit. Once cooked, remove to a small bowl.

step 3 Slice the tomato into 1/4- to 1/2-inch slices. You do not need to de-seed it unless it's a huge tomato and it's dripping with seeds. I leave the seeds in. You want the slices to be decently thick, as this will prevent them from falling apart completely in the pan.

step 4 Put the tomatoes into the same pan the artichokes were in (don't bother to wash it!), and cook 1 to 2 minutes on each side. You shouldn't need more oil; the liquid from the tomatoes will work just fine. Sprinkle each side with a pinch of salt and some pepper. You want to cook them long enough so they begin to soften and get juicy, but not so long that they fall apart. If they do fall apart, or a few slices do, no worries! Using a spatula, remove them from your pan to a plate.

Balsamic reduction, if using
(see recipe on page 98)

1 tablespoon olive oil

1/2 teaspoon dried rosemary

2 artichoke hearts, canned
(packed in water), sliced

1 pinch salt

1 medium tomato, heart-
breakingly ripe

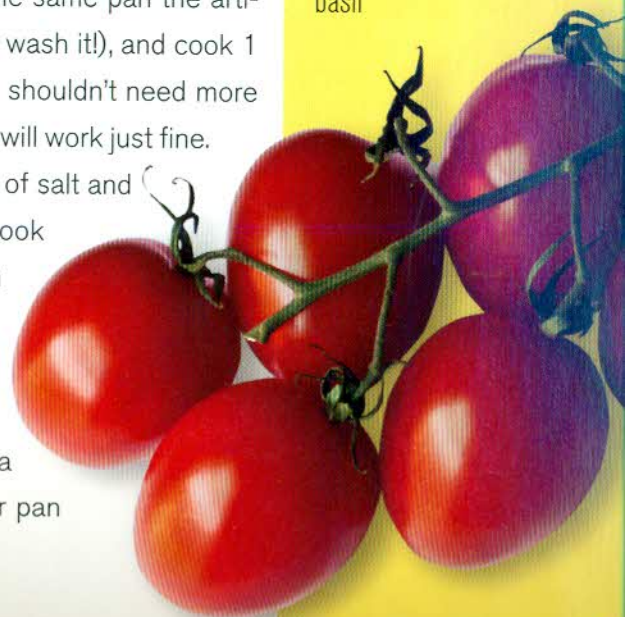
2 pinches salt

Black pepper, to taste

2 slices sourdough bread
(from a larger round loaf or
whatever bread you prefer)

1 to 2 teaspoons olive oil,
for drizzling on bread

Baby spinach and/or fresh
basil



step 5 Drizzle the bread slices lightly with olive oil and grill them. (You can also just oil the grill or a pan and toast it that way.) I do this step last so the bread is still warm and toasty.

step 6 To assemble the sandwich, place the spinach or basil on one slice of the bread, and then the artichokes. Drizzle with the balsamic reduction if using. Top with tomatoes and place the other bread slice on top. You want the tomatoes to be next to one of the pieces of bread so it soaks up the yummy juices.

