

Herbed Ricotta Bruschettas

- 2 cups ricotta, store-bought or homemade (see recipe)
- 3 tablespoons minced scallions, white and green parts (2 scallions)
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh dill
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh chives
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 round sourdough bread
- Good olive oil
- 1 whole garlic clove, cut in half
- Green Salad Vinaigrette (see recipe)

Prepare a charcoal grill with hot coals or turn a gas grill to medium-high heat.

Combine the ricotta, scallions, dill, chives, salt to taste, and ½ teaspoon pepper and set aside. Cut the bread in half and cut each half into 6 thick slices to make 12 slices total.

When the grill is hot, brush the bread with olive oil and grill on each side for 1½ to 2 minutes, until lightly browned. Remove from the grill and rub each slice of bread with the cut side of the garlic clove. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and spread with the herbed ricotta. Serve 2 warm slices per person with the green salad on the side.

Homemade Ricotta (Makes About 2 Cups)

- 4 cups whole milk
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 3 tablespoons good white wine vinegar

Set a large sieve over a deep bowl. Dampen 2 layers of cheesecloth with water and line the sieve with the cheesecloth.

Pour the milk and cream into a stainless-steel or enameled pot such as Le Creuset. Stir in the salt. Bring to a full boil over medium heat, stirring occasionally. Turn off the heat and stir in the -vinegar. Allow the mixture to stand for 1 minute until it curdles. It will separate into thick parts (the curds) and milky parts (the whey).

Pour the mixture into the cheesecloth-lined sieve and allow it to drain into the bowl at room temperature for 20 to 25 minutes, occasionally discarding the liquid that collects in the bowl. The longer you let the mixture drain, the thicker the ricotta. (I tend to like mine on the thicker side, but some prefer it moister.) Transfer the ricotta to a bowl, discarding the cheesecloth and any remaining whey. Use immediately or cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate. The ricotta will keep refrigerated for 4 to 5 days.

Green Salad Vinaigrette (Serves 6)

- 8 to 10 cups salad greens or mesclun mix
- ¼ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice (2 lemons)
- ½ cup good olive oil
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Place the salad greens in a large bowl.

In a small bowl, whisk together the lemon juice, olive oil, salt, and pepper. Pour enough dressing on the salad to moisten. Toss and serve.

