



Mediterranean Picnic Loaf

This Mediterranean Picnic Loaf is the perfect make-ahead meal for summer gatherings, hikes, or a sunny park lunch. Built inside a hollowed-out loaf of crusty bread, it's layered with grilled Ontario vegetables, fresh herbs, creamy cheeses, and tangy homemade sandwich sauce. Olive tapenade and mayonnaise add richness and depth, while cucumber and tomato bring cool freshness. Pressed and chilled before slicing, it's as impressive to look at as it is to eat—no meat required.

Ingredients

4 Servings

For the Sandwich Sauce:

- 1/2 Cup Red Wine Vinegar
- 1 Tsp. Honey
- 1 Tsp. Dijon Mustard
- 1 Tsp. Dried Italian Seasoning
- 1 Tsp. Garlic Powder
- 1/2 Cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 1/2 Tsp. Salt
- 1/2 Tsp. Pepper

For the Sandwich:

- 1 Ontario Bell Pepper, Seeds and Stem Removed, Quartered Lengthwise
- 1 Small Ontario Eggplant, Sliced Crosswise
- 1 Round Loaf of Bread (About 8-10 Inches Wide), Such As Sourdough or Boule
- 1 Ontario Cucumber, Thinly Sliced
- 1 Ontario Heirloom Tomato, Sliced Crosswise
- 1 Cup Fresh Basil Leaves
- 6 Slices Fresh Provolone Cheese, Sliced
- 125g Fresh Mozzarella Cheese, Sliced
- 6 Tbsp. Olive Tapenade
- 4 Tbsp. Mayonnaise

Instructions

Step 1

Preheat grill on medium-high heat.

**Step 2**

Combine vinegar, honey, mustard, Italian seasoning, and garlic powder in a small bowl. While whisking, slowly pour in the olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside.

Step 3

Place the bell pepper and eggplant slices in a bowl and toss with a few spoonfuls of the sandwich sauce. Preheat a grill to medium-high. Grill the vegetables for 10 minutes, turning once, until tender and charred with grill marks. Let cool.

Step 4

Slice the top $\frac{1}{4}$ off the loaf and hollow out the inside, leaving about a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch crust all around to form a shell.

Step 5

Spread 4 tablespoons of the olive tapenade along the base of the loaf. Layer the eggplant slices so they slightly overlap. Arrange the peppers on top and drizzle with a few spoonfuls of the sauce. Top with cheese, basil leaves, cucumbers, and tomatoes. Drizzle with more sandwich sauce, then top with mozzarella.

Step 6

Spread mayonnaise and the remaining 2 tablespoons of tapenade on the cut side of the top piece of bread. Place it on the sandwich and press firmly. Wrap tightly in parchment or plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes, or up to 4 hours.