

# Balsamic Strawberry Caprese

Submitted by Shannon Gaines Bowman

*These tasty bites are like summer on a stick—and a happy blend of tangy, sweet and salty.*

About 2 dozen small to medium-sized fresh basil leaves, rolled and thinly sliced  
Zest from 1 medium-sized lemon  
3 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice  
2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil  
¼ tsp. sea salt  
¼ tsp. sugar  
4 oz. fresh mozzarella cheese, drained and cut into 2 dozen cubes  
1 dozen medium-sized fresh strawberries, washed and dried  
Black peppercorns  
Balsamic vinegar for finishing



1. In a small bowl, combine the basil leaves, lemon zest, lemon juice, oil, salt and sugar.
2. Add the cubed mozzarella and gently toss to be sure all of the cheese is well coated. Cover with plastic wrap, place in the refrigerator, and marinate for 15 minutes.
3. While the cheese is marinating, cut the strawberries, horizontally, into ¼ to ½-inch slices.
4. Remove the marinated cheese from the refrigerator and place 1 dozen pieces of cheese on a serving plate. Then place one strawberry slice on top of each cheese base, being sure to pick up bits of basil and lemon zest with each one. Repeat with a second slice of cheese and strawberry.
5. Gently place a toothpick through each stack.
6. Crack generous amounts of black pepper over the entire plate.
7. Drizzle with Balsamic vinegar and serve.

# Grilled Cheese (on a stick)

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*These are just fine left whole or sliced corner to corner. But if you do the super-fancy, extra-tasty version below, they get really rich, so we highly recommend the smaller bites.*

2 slices "super-seedy bread" or bread of your own choosing

4 Tbsp. butter\*

Sharp cheddar cheese

Pepper jack cheese

(Or two other kinds of cheese you love.)

1. Warm skillet to medium.
2. Prepare sandwich by putting slices of cheese between slices of bread.
3. Melt 2 Tbsp. of butter in the pan.
4. Place sandwich in the skillet and cook until brown around the edges on the bottom.
5. Remove sandwich and melt additional butter.
6. When butter is melted, place other side of sandwich down in skillet.
7. Sandwich is done when bottom side is equally toasty.
8. When sandwich cools, cut into squares and add serving sticks.



## Tasty Twist

\*Super-fancy, extra-tasty version using ginger-scallion butter

4 Tbsp. butter, at room temperature

2 scallions, thinly sliced or minced

1 clove garlic minced (or lots if you love it like Shannon does)

1 heaping tsp. finely-grated, peeled fresh ginger

Salt and freshly-ground pepper to taste

In a small bowl, beat the butter with the scallions, grated ginger, minced garlic, salt and pepper. Substitute for regular butter in recipe above.

# Guacamole

Based on a recipe from Hallmark's *Coloring & Cocktails: Calm The Hell Down, A Recipe & Coloring Book for a Girls' Night In*

2 Haas avocados, scooped out  
2 Tbsp. minced red onion  
½ medium tomato  
Juice of ½ lime  
½ tsp. cayenne pepper sauce

In a bowl, mash the avocado with a fork.  
Mix in the onion, tomato, lime juice and hot sauce.

## *Tasty Twists*

Add or substitute a small shallot or 2-3 garlic cloves for the onion

Add a handful of chopped cilantro

Add ½ minced jalapeno

Add ½ tsp. cumin (or more, to taste)

Serve with sliced jicama for a non-greasy, low-calorie alternative to chips

