



Mayonnaise, tomatoes and store-bought white bread. The beauty is in its simplicity.

The tomato and mayonnaise sandwich

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The best sandwich in the universe – at least for the month of August

Scorpacciata is a term that means consuming large amounts of a particular local ingredient while it's in season. It's a good way to eat. *Let Mario Batali pronounce it for you.*

A tomato and mayonnaise sandwich on store-bought white bread is the finest sandwich known to mankind.

This is not up for debate, and the ingredients are not negotiable. Salt and pepper are permissible, but if you try to get schmancier than that, you'll screw it all up, and your sandwich should be taken away from you until you learn to properly appreciate the simple perfection of this combination.

You will not have the opportunity to eat one between, say, mid-September and the beginning of next August, so it's best that you consume them as frequently as humanly possible while tomatoes are in season. One day would not be overkill and you and your physician should just devise a plan for counteracting any potential over-mayonnaising you may encounter during this period of your gastronomic life.

There may not be Duke's mayonnaise for sale where you live. That's a shame, and you should really try to get some, because it's markedly less sugary than other commercial mayonnaise brands and allows the tomato slices to sing their luscious, sweet and tangy tune.

Hellmann's will also get the job done, but if anyone begins to bring up the possibility of making the mayonnaise for this sandwich at home ("It's sooooo eeeeeaaassyyy. Just use your billeeenderrrr..."), banish them to the porch until they have contemplated the error of their ways. Yes, even if it is raining. Simplicity is serious business here.

Same goes for the white bread. You must not make this bread, nor should the word "artisanal" be uttered within 100 paces of it. You must purchase this bread and the word "crappy" must be at least somewhat applicable to it. Chef Bill Smith of Crook's Corner restaurant in Chapel Hill, North Carolina makes his with store-bought bread (a move New Orleans chef Adolfo Garcia reportedly referred to as "ballsy") and the man's won or been nominated for every big cooking award under the sun. Trust him, for he is a professional maker of tomato mayo sandwiches.

Upon this soft, crappy bread, slather the mayonnaise. How thickly and on one or both slices - that's your business. On top of one slice, layer tomatoes.

Now, these tomatoes. You did not under any circumstances pick these up at the supermarket, unless you know for really and for truly that they've worked out some sort of deal with a local farmer. This isn't about being a snob; it's about making sure your food tastes of something other than vaguely sour red-colored packing material and was picked under humane conditions,

The tomatoes should come from a farm, a farmstand, a neighbor or if you're extremely lucky, your own garden. If the angels are smiling upon you from the heavens and you saved a basket of kittens from certain death on a railroad track in a past life, these tomato will be of an heirloom variety. They should be red (yes the yellows, oranges and purples are stunning to behold, but we're on a particular mission here) and taste of blue skies and blazing sun. At the very least, they should have been grown in soil rather than a hydroponic compound, but sometimes, we must make do. If they have seen the inside of a fridge, though, skip them. These are not the tomatoes you're looking for.

Cut the slices to whatever depth brings you the greatest pleasure. For some, this will be akin to the thickness of a thumb. Others may wish to skim this month's copy of Nightshade Enthusiast through theirs. Either way, you're in it for the juice - or rather the locular jelly, which is that luscious goop in the center that holds all the acid. There should be enough of that to stain the mayonnaise a light pink and make your knees buckle just a little bit.

When you're finished layering the slices. Stack on the top slice and...wait. It'll taste good right now, but it'll be even better in ten or fifteen minutes when the juice has had a chance to seep in and meld with the mayonnaise and juuuuust begin to sog up that first millimeter or two of bread. You've held out all year for tomatoes to be in season - what's a few minutes more?

And when you do finally grasp that sandwich with both hands, lift it to your mouth and take that first big, sloppy bite of summer, all the world will melt away for a minute. Then you'll start dreaming of your next one.

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RT @HolemanandFinch: We're not all that into rules, but here's a few we like. <http://on.cnn.com/nYo0GO>

10:50 pm UTC, August 10 2011



Some folks are arguing that a tomato & mayonnaise sandwich should be made with whole wheat bread.

They are wrong. on.cnn.com/ncXziz 2:16 pm UTC, August 10

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RT @debpuhalla: honor loved ones Friday w Peanut Butter Pie--every day counts. love to Jen and her girls.

RT @jenniferperillo for mikey <http://t.co/BkE4CaY> 2:07

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