

Panini Nord e Sud

1/2 lb. of hot sopressata or other salami
1/4 lb. of Prosciutto di Parma or domestic prosciutto
1/2 lb. of semisoft Fontina Val d'Aosta
1 bunch of broccoli rabe
3 red bell peppers, roasted
1 garlic clove, minced
3 Ciabatta, Baguette, or long Italian bread sliced in half horizontally
1/3 cup of olive oil

Roasting the Red Peppers

Line a baking sheet with foil and place the peppers on it. Heat broiler. Broil 6 inches from flame, turning with tongs until blackened on all sides. Remove. Place in a closed paper bag to sweat for 10 minutes. When cool enough to handle, peel off the blackened skin. Cut in half, remove seeds, and slice into 2-inch-wide strips.

Preparing the Broccoli Rave

Wash the broccoli rabe thoroughly, trim off any tough stems, and place it in boiling water for about 3-5 minutes, just until tender. Do not overcook. Drain, refresh under cold water, squeeze dry, and chop finely. In 2 tablespoons of olive oil, gently heat the garlic until fragrant, then add the chopped broccoli rabe and sauté gently until heated through. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Assembling the Panini

- Brush the cut side of each Ciabatta with the remaining olive olive oil.
- Line the bottom half of the Ciabatta with the Fontina cheese slices.
- Place 1/3 of the Sopressata over the cheese.
- Place 1/3 of the Prosciutto over the Sopressata
- Divide the red-pepper slices evenly over the Prosciutto
- Divide the broccoli rabe evenly over the red peppers and place the upper half of the Ciabatta on top.
- Gently press the top and bottom halves of the Ciabatta together with your hands.

Heating and Pressing the Panini

Generally, panini are cooked in a special press. I don't own one, but I find that two frying pans work perfectly, as long as one fits inside the other. I heat one pan over medium heat until hot, while I heat a cast-iron skilled (naturally with a clean bottom) on the other burner. When both pans are hot place, one or two panini in the larger pan then press down firmly with the second frying pan, using oven mitts. Check the bottoms of the panini to be certain they are not burning. Heat until the cheese melts. Serve.