



INGREDIENTS

- 500g fresh young broad beans
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
- 6 small basil leaves
- Salt flakes, to taste
- 4 slices rustic bread
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and bruised
- 100g ricotta (optional)
- 1 lemon

Broad Bean & Ricotta Bruschetta

Every meal at Lucio's Paddington restaurant started with bruschetta, a slice of delicious toasted Italian bread, topped with a mound of something seasonal. I love using tender young broad beans during their short spring season, in summer it's often diced ripe tomatoes, sliced sauteed mushrooms are wonderful in autumn, and in winter preserved foods like beautiful anchovies in olive oil or a dice of olives with some fresh herbs is the perfect start to a meal. I sometimes spread some ricotta under the broad bean purée, but it's also delicious on its own.

Serves 4-8 as a starter

METHOD

1. Remove broad beans from the pod.
2. Blanch in well-salted boiling water for 2 minutes, refresh in iced water then drain.
3. Cut a slit in the top of each pod and squeeze them to slip off the thick outer skin.
4. Place in a small food processor with oil, basil and salt and pulse to a coarse paste.
5. Toast the bread and, while still warm, rub with the garlic, discarding the debris.
6. Drizzle with oil.
7. Top with ricotta (if using) then broad bean paste.
8. Cut in half on the diagonal and grate a little lemon zest over the top.
9. Sprinkle with salt, drizzle with oil and serve.