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Cranberry Salsa Crostini

Makes 2.5 cups of salsa

Looking for a fast and festive appetizer? This Cranberry Salsa Crostini is just the answer! It's delicious and a cinch to assemble. It takes advantage of an often stereotyped, seasonal fruit and presents it in a new way. Try this during Thanksgiving week, and maybe a few more times throughout the upcoming holiday season.

Salsa Ingredients:

1 bag (12oz) fresh cranberries
2 jalapeños, seeded and coarsely sliced
4-6 scallions, green and white parts, sliced (about 1/2 cup)
1/4 cup cilantro, roughly chopped, packed
1 tablespoon lime juice, freshly squeezed
1/4 teaspoon Kosher salt
3/4 cup sugar, more to taste, as desired
1/4 teaspoon cumin

Homemade Crostini:

Slice a baguette into 1/4" slices, brush each slice with olive oil on both sides and bake (turning once) at 375°F until golden brown - about 5-7 minutes per side.

To Serve:

16 oz. cream cheese (two pkgs.)

Salsa Directions:

1. Rinse the fresh cranberries in a colander. Pick out any bruised or withered berries. Towel dry the cranberries and place into the work bowl of a food processor.
2. Cut off the stem end of the jalapeño peppers, halve, remove the seeds, and any rib membranes. Coarsely chop the peppers and add to the cranberries. Prep the scallions by washing and trimming away the root end. Roughly slice the scallions including about 6 inches of the onion's green portion. Add the scallions to the food processor.
3. Rinse the cilantro well and pat dry. Remove any coarse stems of the cilantro, but it's perfectly fine to include the tender portion of the stems in this salsa. (Not having to stem the cilantro will save a lot of time!) Add the cilantro to the food processor.
4. Add the remaining ingredients: lime juice, salt, sugar, and cumin.
5. Pulse the mixture in the food processor stopping occasionally to scrape down the sides. Chop until all of the ingredients are finely chopped, but not pureed.
6. Transfer the mixture to a bowl for refrigerator storage. Chill for at least one hour. As the salsa chills, the sugar will promote the release of the cranberries' juices. It will turn a lovely deep red – a dazzling color for any holiday table all season long. Stays fresh for up to 3 days -- a great do-ahead dish!