

crisp homemade croutons

Serves: 8-12

Prep and Cook time: 1 hour

Per serving: 158 calories, 12 g fat, 121 mg sodium

12 bread slices (for about 4 cups 1/2 inch cubes, lightly packed)

1/4 tsp garlic powder (optional)

1/2 tsp dried basil (optional)

1/2 cup olive oil or 4 TBS (1/2 stick) butter, melted

1. Preheat the oven to 325° F.
2. Trim the crusts from the bread, saving them to make bread crumbs. Cut the bread into 1/2-inch cubes and place them in a single layer in a baking pan and bake, uncovered, for 10 minutes. Remove the pan from the oven, stir the cubes, and return the pan to the oven. Bake, uncovered, for 10 more minutes.
3. Remove the pan from the oven. Drizzle the oil over the cubes and sprinkle the garlic powder and basil (if using) evenly over them. Stir well.
4. Return the pan to the oven and continue to bake, uncovered, removing the pan from the oven to stir the croutons every 5 minutes, until the croutons are golden brown and crisp, 15 to 20 minutes.
5. Allow the croutons to cool to room temperature. They will stay fresh for up to 3 weeks in an airtight container at room temperature.

Note: Bread that is still slightly frozen is easier to cut. You don't need to get the ruler out and measure. Slight variations in size are fine. Also, don't waste your stale bread! Once it is baked, the bread will taste delicious!

