

# Catalonian Grilled Bread with Tomato

Serves 4-6 | 15 minutes prep + 10 minutes cook time

One thing that all Catalonians agree on: their favorite food and the symbol of their national identity is a grilled slice of rustic bread rubbed with a cut tomato, drizzled with extra virgin olive oil, and sprinkled with salt. Called pa amb tomàquet (and pronounced pam tu'maket), the simple dish epitomizes what Catalonians call seny, the sensible, down-to-earth, thrifty, down-to-earth, hard-working approach to life that might be summed up in the popular saying, 'We make use of everything.'

Pa amb tomàquet is, of course, a relatively recent addition to the Catalonian table. New World tomatoes arrived on the Iberian Peninsula in the 1500s, and the first references to the tomato-rubbed bread don't appear until the late 1800s. But that doesn't make it any less delicious, and during tomato season I eat it regularly. While the Catalonians often use it to make sandwiches, I like it on its own so the tomato flavor shines. If I'm feeling adventurous, I'll add an oil-cured anchovy or vinegary boquerone and maybe a shot of mayo to mimic aioli. It also pushes the pa amb tomàquet toward the all-American tomato sandwich just a bit, but the combination is tasty.

**6-8 slices of rustic bread, such as Ken's Artisan Bakery batard**

**3-4 medium sized ripe tomatoes**

**extra virgin olive oil, as needed**

**flaky salt, as needed**

**anchovies (oil-cured, boquerones, or both), optional**

**Kewpie mayo, optional**

**Step 1** Grill or toast the bread until both sides are lightly browned.

**Step 2** Cut the tomatoes in half on the equator (as opposed to the stem end). Rub each half on a slice of the bread, pressing hard enough to extract most of the juice and pulp. Be like the Catalonians and eat the ragged bit of peel with a pinch of salt.

**Step 3** Drizzle each slice with olive oil and sprinkle with salt.

**Step 4** If desired, add an anchovy and small dab of mayo to each slice.