**Cheater’s Panini (aka Adult Grilled Cheese)**

A real panini is made with a panini press that can heat both sides of the sandwich at the same time while also putting weight on the sandwich. I make a “cheater’s panini” by cooking the sandwich on a non-stick grill pan, which is just a pan that has raised lines on it to simulate the lines on an open grill, and by pressing down on top with a spatula. You can also make this in a regular pan, but then I think it would technically be an “Adult Grilled Cheese”. I’ll leave any official rulings on sandwiches to John Hodgman (google it), but I will say that this tastes better than my regular sandwich, no matter what it’s called.

Equipment:

A pan (non-stick preferred, grill pan if you have it)

A spatula (which some people call a “flipper”, just to add more name confusion)

Ingredients:

* Sliced bread of any kind
* Sliced cheese (or slice it yourself) – I’ve used Fontina, Provolone, Cheddar, Mozzarella, and Colby (yes, I am named after a type of cheese)
* Butter (or olive oil if you prefer)
* Fillings

Filling combinations:

* Tomato with arugula or spinach
* Artichoke hearts, roasted red pepper, and spinach
* Anything that sounds good to you or just anything that you can find at the store

Here are some tips on preparing the fillings:

* Artichoke hearts. I use canned artichoke hearts. Rinse them, dry them, and slice them.
* Red peppers. You can buy roasted red peppers in a jar, or you can roast them yourself, but that will add to your time. Here’s a recipe for roasting them: <https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/ina-garten/roasted-red-peppers-recipe-1923836>
* Tomatoes. Slice them raw and add a little salt.
* Spinach. You can use fresh or frozen. If you use frozen, first follow the cooking instructions on the bag.
* Storage: You can prepare the fillings and store them to make paninis for days.

Instructions

1. Prepare the fillings (see tips above). Slice the cheese and bread if not pre-sliced.
2. Heat the pan over medium heat.
3. Butter one side each of two slices of bread (those will be the outsides of your sandwich). Alternatively, you could use olive oil.
4. On the unbuttered side of one slice of bread, arrange your fillings. Add slices of cheese on top, followed by the second piece of bread with the buttered side up.
5. Use your spatula to move the sandwich onto the pan. Cook that side for about 3-4 minutes until golden brown (it’s ok to peek).
6. Flip the sandwich and cook the second side. Press down on the top of the sandwich with your spatula for about 10 seconds (now it’s a panini!). Once everything is getting melty, press the sandwich for another ten seconds until the bottom side is golden brown.
7. Remove from the pan and eat.