

**I met up with a friend a day or so ago.** She was taking a deep breath after a crazy busy weekend. Her grandchildren breezed through town and stayed the night on their way to camp. It got me to thinking of my days at Camp Four Winds. For most people, summer camp was one of those things you either loved or hated. Just to be a contrarian, I was neither obsessed nor filled with fear and loathing.

**I like to think that I was really very teeny tiny** when I went off to camp. As a child, I was always following in my sister's footsteps. A few years older, as soon as Brenda went to camp, I wanted in. So, while my sister was probably eight or nine when she headed off to camp for the first time, I was ready at six. Okay, maybe seven, but I know I was still a Brownie.



**Of course, we went to Girl Scout Camp.** It was more or less a given. A proud Camp Fire Girl, Mom went to one of their camps. Dad went to Y camp (as in YMCA). Regardless of generation or affiliation, the critical criteria were two weeks on a pond in the woods and dirt cheap. Given the givens, Camp Four Winds fit the bill but was nothing fancy.

**There is a reason that I always think of myself as ever so young** when I went off to camp. One of a couple of things happened and I don't know which. It could be I forgot to tell Mom that I wanted to go to camp until the last minute. Alternatively, I told her at a time when she was busy doing a thousand motherly things all at once and she didn't hear me. Or finally, I told her but she didn't believe me and it took some time to convince her. Regardless of why, I must have signed up late. In spite of being one of the youngest campers at Four Winds, all the girls in my unit were at a couple of years older than me. Then again, maybe Mom got my date of birth wrong on the application.

**Anyway, Brenda spent her first year at Four Winds in the cushy little girls unit.** It could be my vivid imagination but I think they had flush toilets. Not only was I younger but I roughed it with the big girls. We had cold showers and latrines. We also had to walk five miles in a snowstorm to get to the dining hall for breakfast. Oops – no, wait a minute, that's another story!

**Being the youngest and smallest girl in my group** did have its advantages. The other kids took me for some sort of mascot or woe-be-gone in need of a helping hand. From morning chores to an extra marshmallow on s'mores night, I suspect I got away with quite a lot during those two weeks.

**It didn't hurt that I showed up with a plethora of pink clothing.** Most of the time, we wore camp uniforms. An army of girls from seven to seventeen, we were all identically clad. There were dark green shorts and shirts for everyday and whites for Sunday. However, we could declare our own true selves with our bathing suits and pajamas. It must have been some strange coincidence. Both new and hand-me-downs, from my bathrobe and fluffy slippers to my bathing suit, everything in my camp trunk, except the uniforms, was pink.

**The big girls were delighted.** In less than twenty-four hours, I'd earned the nickname Pinky. I was well taken care of and coddled but it didn't last long. As soon as I hopped in the station wagon for the trip home, I was back to being Susie ... and all that went with it.

Happy summer and bon appétit!

## Tomato & Burrata Salad with Grilled Bread

*Burrata is a fresh Italian cheese made from mozzarella and cream. It is delicious with fresh local tomatoes and warm bread. Enjoy!*

Serves 8

About 1 tablespoon or to taste red wine vinegar  
Extra-virgin olive oil to taste  
2 garlic cloves  
1/4-1/2 red onion, thinly sliced  
2 1/2-3 pounds very ripe tomatoes, cut into wedges  
Sea salt and freshly ground pepper to taste  
8 slices ciabatta  
2-4 balls fresh Burrata  
1/2-3/4 cup torn basil leaves

Preheat the grill to high.

Put the vinegar in a large bowl, add olive oil to taste and whisk to combine. Mince one of the garlic cloves, add it and the onion to the oil and vinegar and toss to coat. Add the tomatoes, season with salt and pepper and toss again.

Arrange the bread on the grill and cook, turning once, for about 30 seconds per side or until nicely toasted. Remove from the grill, rub each piece of bread with the remaining garlic clove, brush lightly with olive oil and sprinkle with a pinch of salt.

Place the still warm bread on individual plates, top with tomatoes and Burrata, garnish with torn basil and serve.

