

Strategies Applied:

- **Bread:** Use your heels or leftover bread of almost any type. I often throw bits and pieces into the freezer for bread crumbs and croutons. I do think a good sourdough or artisanal type bread (like my [Crusty Bread](#)) is really best, but it's hard to go wrong. If the bread is too hard to cut but is still good, just pop it in the microwave, wrapped in a damp cloth, for about 20 seconds. Since I use what would have been tossed in a normal household, I often think of this as free. If you've bought a loaf to make these, the large Italian loaves are often on sale for a dollar. Three cups is about a quarter of one of those loaves.
- **Olive Oil:** My strategy for buying [olive oil](#) is to look for sales and combine with coupons. I look for about 8 cents an ounce (a tablespoon) so cost for this recipe is about 25 cents. Save the good stuff for drizzling and finishing. A quarter cup is about two tablespoons: 16 cents to 35.
- **Cheese:** This is a variable here and completely optional. Your choice and your price here. If you do buy what I call "near" deli cheeses (because they are usually located by the deli,) you'll find coupons (on the brand's site) and on hang tags and can often pick it up reasonably. Grab those hang tags even if you aren't planning on buying it the same day - the expiration dates are often months out, and you can wait for a sale. When the sales finally happen, there often aren't any hang tags. 3/4 cup is about an ounce and a half, grated. Cost varies, between 40 and 70 cents.
- **Herbs:** I grow herbs year round here in Minnesota - I put them in a pot and bring them inside during the winter, then take them back outside in the spring.