

FRESH BASIL & PINE NUT PESTO

If you're the kind of person who misses summertime during the cold winter months, Fresh Basil & Pine Nut Pesto is the gift you're going to give yourself. In the deep summer, basil thrives and this year my small garden patch has given our family such a bumper crop that I'm making extra of this and tucking a few jars into my freezer. So, when winter drags on a bit after the fun of Christmas and New Year's has passed, I'm going to open a jar of this bright green, fresh pesto, savor the bounties of late summer days and (maybe) map out next year's garden. Makes 3 glorious cups. 1 cup is a perfectly generous amount for covering 1 pound of your favorite al dente pasta.

The Ingredients

- 3 large cloves of garlic
- 1 large lemon, zested and juiced
- 1½ cups pine nuts, lightly toasted in a pan
- ¾ teaspoon coarse Kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper (optional)
- 6 cups basil leaves, washed with stems removed
- 2 cups good, full-bodied olive oil
- 1½ cups grated Parmesan cheese

The Method

1. In a food processor, pulse to rough chop the garlic, lemon zest and juice, pine nuts, salt, and pepper all together. Add as much of the basil as you can and pulse to chop, stopping occasionally to scrape down the sides of the bowl. Add the rest of the leaves, if needs be, and continue pulsing until a rough paste is formed.
2. With the processor on full speed, slowly drizzle in the olive oil. Scrape down the sides as needed, and continue processing until all the oil is fully incorporated. Add the Parmesan cheese and pulse until it reaches your desired consistency. Taste to check your salt and pepper levels and adjust to suit your preference.

Tips

- To freeze, simply divide the finished pesto into air-tight containers, any size of your choice. It will keep for up to 6 months in a nice cold freezer.
- Use this in your pasta salad instead of olive oil to add instant flavor.
- Add a dollop to your pasta sauce as a stir in for an extra fresh upgrade.

