



Fresh Basil Pesto

Note that pesto is always made to taste, based on the ingredients at hand. So adjust the ingredients as you like. Most pesto recipes call for Parmesan cheese, but feel free to use Romano which has a stronger flavor. And while most recipes call for pine nuts you can easily substitute walnuts.

If you want to freeze the pesto you make, omit the cheese (it doesn't freeze well). Line an ice cube tray with plastic wrap, and fill each pocket with the pesto. Freeze and then remove from the ice tray and store in a freezer bag. When you want to use, defrost and add in grated Parmesan or Romano.

For an unexpected treat, try pesto on rice, which holds onto the flavor more than pasta does.

Ingredients

- 2 cups fresh basil leaves, packed
- 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan-Reggiano or Romano cheese
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/3 cup pine nuts or walnuts
- 3 medium sized garlic cloves, minced
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

- *Special equipment needed:* A food processor

Combine the basil in with the pine nuts, pulse a few times in a food processor. (If you are using walnuts instead of pine nuts and they are not already chopped, pulse them a few times first, before adding the basil.) Add the garlic, pulse a few times more.

Slowly add the olive oil in a constant stream while the food processor is on. Stop to scrape down the sides of the food processor with a rubber spatula. Add the grated cheese and pulse again until blended. Add a pinch of salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste.

Serve with pasta or rice, or over baked potatoes, or spread over toasted baguette slices.

Makes 1 cup.

Adapted from www.simplyrecipes.com