

The Original Painter's Pesto

* Pesto is great served on bread, pizza, pasta, baked potatoes, seafood or poultry, veggies and more!

Ingredients:

2 cloves garlic peeled
2 tablespoons pine nuts
¼ teaspoon coarse salt
3 cups/3ounces fresh basil leaves
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided
¼ cup grated parmesan cheese

Wash the basil, discard the stems and dry thoroughly. In a food processor or blender, add garlic, pine nuts and salt; process for approximately 15 seconds. Add basil leaves and pulse continuously to shred the leaves. Gradually add the olive oil to create a course mash, then add the parmesan and pulse to combine. Makes approximately 1 cup.

Pesto will keep for up to 4 weeks in a covered container in the refrigerator. Pour a thin film of olive oil on top of the pesto to prevent discoloration. For longer storage, do not add the parmesan cheese until ready to use.

Zesty Cilantro Pesto

* This pesto can be used in the same way as basil pesto, but considering trying it in Mexican dishes also.

Ingredients:

1 bunch fresh cilantro (you can put the stems in too as long as they aren't too thick)
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon white wine vinegar or lemon/lime juice
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper (or leave it out if you don't like the heat)
1/2 cup walnuts or pecans
1/2 cup olive oil
salt to taste

In an electric food processor or blender, blend cilantro, garlic, vinegar, Parmesan cheese, cayenne pepper and salt. It works best to put the liquid ingredients in first (vinegar and about half of the oil), then add the cilantro and cheese in gradually as you pulse. If you have a cheap blender like me, then you probably want to pulse the nuts separately before putting them in the mix. I use a small electric chopper to finely chop the nuts prior to adding them to the blender. It works best to add the nuts last, gradually adding them and the remaining half of the oil to the mix. Feel free to add more oil, cheese or nuts to adjust the consistency to your liking! This recipe makes between 1- ½ cups of pesto. ENJOY!