

Fresh Basil Pesto

Prep time: 15 minutes

Yield: Makes 1 cup

Basil pesto darkens when exposed to air, so to store, cover tightly with plastic wrap making sure the plastic is touching the top of the pesto and not allowing the pesto to have contact with air. The pesto will stay greener longer that way.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups fresh basil leaves, packed (can sub half the basil leaves with baby spinach)
- ¼ cup fresh lemon balm
- ½ cup freshly grated Romano or Parmesan-Reggiano cheese (about 2 ounces)
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
- ⅓ cup sunflower seeds (can any kind of nut product)
- 3 garlic cloves, minced (about 3 teaspoons)
- ¼ teaspoon salt, more to taste
- ⅛ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, more to taste

METHOD:

- Pulse basil and sunflower seeds in a food processor or blender:
- Place the basil leaves, lemon balm and sunflower seeds into the bowl of a food processor and pulse a several times.
- Stream in the olive oil: While the food processor is running, slowly add the olive oil in a steady small stream. Adding the olive oil slowly, while the processor is running, will help it emulsify and help keep the olive oil from separating. Occasionally stop to scrape down the sides of the food processor.
- Stir in salt and freshly ground black pepper, add more to taste.
- Toss with pasta for a quick sauce, dollop over baked potatoes, or spread onto crackers or toasted slices of bread.

Roasted Chicken Breast and Brussels Sprouts:

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- Take 1 lb. Boneless Skinless Chicken Breast on and place in an oven safe pan. Drizzle generously with olive oil, season with Salt and Pepper, to your taste.

- Cut 8 oz. Brussels Sprouts in half and add to pan with Chicken. Drizzle with oil, season with Salt and Pepper to your taste.
- Roast in oven for about 15-18 minutes, until chicken is completely cooked (165 degrees).
- Pull and cool to room temperature.
- Chop chicken into bite size pieces.

Finish the meal:

- Cook Tortellini in lightly salted water, per package directions
- Cut grape tomatoes in half and slice mushrooms and set aside.
- Drain pasta and rinse in cool water to stop cooking process.
- Heat your favorite sautee pan on medium, with 2 times around the pan with olive oil.
- Add chicken and mushroom and toss around. Place a teaspoon of chopped garlic pinch of salt and pepper, along with Brussels Sprouts
- Toss until mushrooms start to slightly soften. Add pasta and pesto, then toss gently and well.
- Place in your favorite 4 pasta bowls and top with parmesan reggiano cheese. Serve with your favorite bread.

Enjoy!