

Basil Pesto



TIPS:

1. I call **basil pesto** “summer butter”, and I use it regularly on pasta and grains, as a sandwich spread, with freshly cooked or uncooked vegetables (you’ve gotta’ check it out on corn on the cob), on freshly cooked fish or chicken - just about anything. Great stuff!

2. **The Hardest Part:** The hardest part about making pesto is crushing the garlic to make the garlic cloves easy to peel and making sure the basil leaves

are well rinsed to avoid getting an annoying crunch for the sandy soil that usually sticks to the leaves when the basil is harvested. This recipe shows how to deal with both problems as quickly and easily as possible.

Preparation Time: 15-20 minutes

Ingredients

1 Bunch Fresh Basil

1 Garlic Bulb

Grated Parmesan Cheese

1/2 Teaspoon of Salt

Crunch of Black Pepper

Olive Oil

Handful of Your Favorite Nuts (I usually use either a lightly salted version of roasted almonds, no salt walnuts, or lightly salted mixed nuts)

Shot of Balsamic Vinegar (optional but adds a punch of flavor)



Equipment

Food Processor with an “S”-Shaped Processor Knife Blade

Water Basin

Cutting Board

Strainer or Colander

Large Sharp (Chef’s) Knife

Spatula



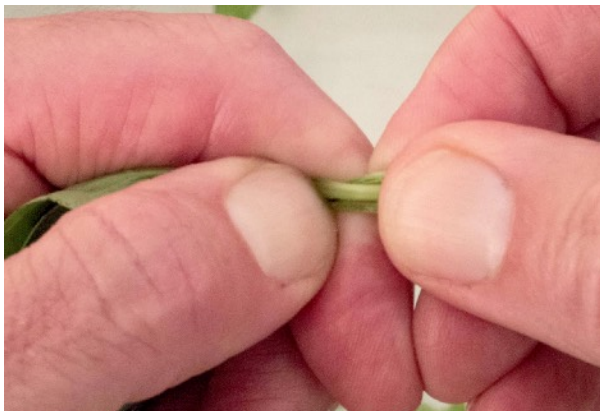
1. Put the “S”-shaped knife blade onto the spindle in the food processor bowl, and make sure both the bowl and blade are snugly seated in place.



2. To clean the **fine sandy soil** that often times sticks to **fresh basil leaves** (and is no fun to bite on later!), first fill a basin about 1 / 2 full with cold tap water.



Then pinch the **basil leaves** from their **stems** and put the **leaves** in the water.



Give the **basil leaves** a good hand-scrubbing wash in the water, scoop the **clean leaves** out of the water into a colander or strainer, and give the **leaves** a squeeze dry. (The small inset picture below shows the sandy soil on the bottom of the basin left over from cleaning the basil leaves.)



3. Pull all the **garlic cloves** from a **garlic bulb**.



Put the **garlic cloves** on the cutting board and cover them, one **garlic clove** a time, with the flat side of a wide bladed (chef's) knife. Press on the top flat side of the knife with the heel of your hand until you hear and feel the **garlic skins** pop open.



Peel the **skin** from the **garlic cloves**, and put the **garlic cloves** in the food processor.



4. Put the **cleaned basil leaves** into the food processor and top with **1 / 2 teaspoon of salt** (or as much salt as shown below in the picture to the right),
...



...a good crunch of ground black pepper,
a good pour (at least 1 / 4 cup or 2 ounces)
of olive oil,...



...an **optional** shot of **balsamic vinegar**, and about as much **grated Parmesan cheese** and **nuts** as shown in the second and third pictures below.



5. Snap the food processor bowl top in place, turn on the processor, and...



...let the processor work until the **ingredients** become well mixed together about as shown below. (**NOTE:** *If your **pesto** turns out thicker than what is shown in the larger picture below, add a little more **olive oil** and/or **vinegar** (optional) to thin it out as shown in the insert picture below right.*)



6. Use a spatula to clean the S-shaped processor blade and scoop the **basil pesto** into a container (I'm using a plastic container so that I can safely freeze the pesto).



To freeze **basil pesto**, which keeps the **pesto** fresh for months, cover with a top, squeeze out any **excess air** (to avoid freezer burn on the pesto) as shown in the second picture below, and store in the freezer.



7. Processor cleaning tips: First, pour warm water and good shot of dish soap into the processor bowl in the sink.



Use a dish brush to clean the spatula and bowl top.



Use a dish brush to clean the outside of the “S”-shaped knife blade and a toothbrush (or very narrow bottlebrush) to clean the hard-to-reach inside of the blade assembly.



Finish by cleaning the bowl with a dish sponge and then letting all the cleaned processor pieces air dry in a dish rack.

