

Hand-Chopped 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.
2. I put together this easy recipe for those who do not have - or don’t like cleaning - a food processor. At the same time, I’m a big fan of hand-chopped basil pesto for its more coarse texture and, of course, killer flavor!

Preparation Time: 15-20 minutes

Ingredients

1 Bunch Fresh Basil

4-5 Garlic Cloves

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

1/2 Teaspoon of Salt

Crunch of Black Pepper

Grated Parmesan Cheese

Olive Oil

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



Equipment

Water Basin

Cutting Board

Strainer or Colander

Large Sharp (Chef's) Knife

Bowl

Large Spoon



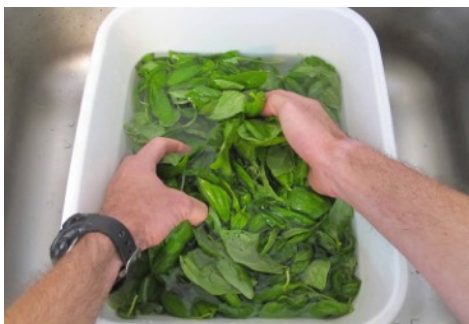
1. To clean the **fine sandy soil** that often times sticks to **fresh basil leaves** (and is no fun to bite on later!), first fill a basin about 1 / 2 full with cold tap water.



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



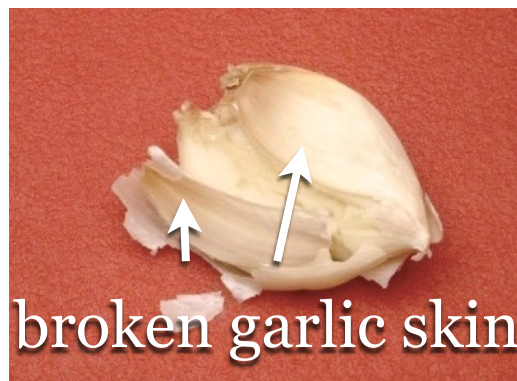
Give the **basil leaves** a good hand-scrubbing wash in the water, scoop the **clean leaves** out of the water into a colander or strainer, and give the **leaves** a squeeze dry. (The small inset picture below shows the sandy soil on the bottom of the basin left over from cleaning the basil leaves.)



2. Pull 4-5 **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 off the **garlic skins**. Then hold the **garlic cloves** securely to the cutting board with curled fingers, and let the side of the knife blade touch and glide along your curled knuckles as you cut the **garlic** into thin slices about 1/8 inch (3 mm) wide.



Finish by chopping the **garlic slices** into smaller pieces - *and cleaning off the knife blade safely as shown below* - until the **garlic** is chopped about as shown below.



3. Ball up the **cleaned basil leaves** in your hand, and cut the **basil** into slices about 1/2 inch (12 mm) wide.



Keep chopping and scraping the **basil** together until it looks about as shown...



...here.



Then, scrape the **chopped garlic** together with the

chopped basil and keep chopping them together until they look about as shown...



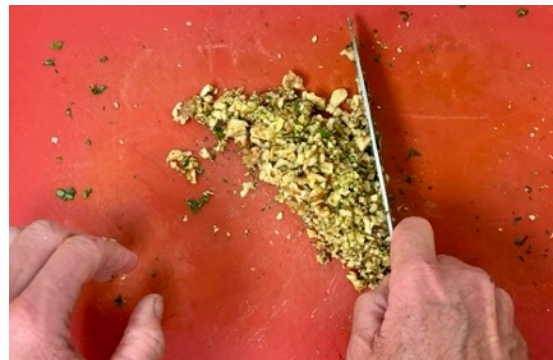
...below left, and scrape what you've chopped into a bowl.



4. Pour a **good handful of nuts** on the cutting board then chop and...



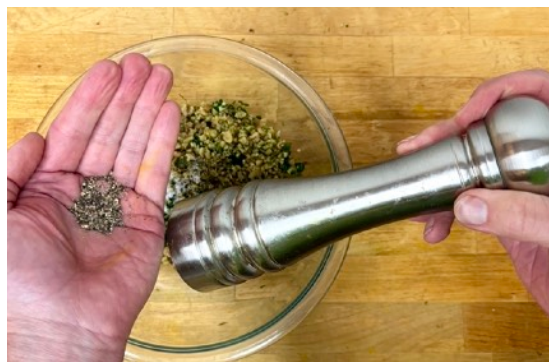
...scrape them together to continue chopping until they look about like...



...this (left), and add them to the bowl (right).



5. Add about **1/2 teaspoon or as much salt** as shown in the picture on the left, a **good crunch of ground black pepper**,...



...a **good shot of olive oil**, about **1/2 as much of the oil you used of balsamic (or any) vinegar** and...



...about as much **grated Parmesan cheese** as shown below.



6. Stir with a big spoon, add more **olive oil** if the ingredients look dry and crumbly, and keep stirring until what you have looks about like...



...this.



7. Store **leftover pesto** in a container and keep refrigerated for a least a week.



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