

CHEF CULTURES LLC

FRESH BASIL PESTO

Prep Time: 15 minutes | Yield: Approximately 1 cup

Fresh basil pesto is one of the great expressions of Mediterranean garden cooking. Traditionally originating from Genoa in the Liguria region of Italy, pesto celebrates the vibrant flavors of fresh herbs, garlic, olive oil, and cheese. This version highlights basil at its peak and can be adapted with additional herbs, toasted nuts, or grated cheeses. It is versatile and bright—perfect for pasta, vegetables, marinades, and spreads.

Ingredients

4 oz fresh basil leaves, stems removed

2 fresh medium garlic cloves

3/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

1 teaspoons kosher salt

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1/2 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest

Juice of ½ fresh lemon

Optional: 1 tablespoon fresh herbs such as oregano, parsley, or blanched nettles

Optional: 1–2 tablespoons nuts (pine nuts, walnuts, or cashews), toasted or raw

Optional: Finely grated Parmesan or other hard cheese

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Chef Cultures 3-Phase Technique

PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	
Prepare Ingredients	Blend & Emulsify	Finish & Adjust	
			
Prep basil & garlic. Measure oil, lemon, & seasonings	Blend with olive oil until smooth & emulsified.	Add lemon, salt & pepper. Pulse to taste.	
SERVE & ENJOY			
			
Tos: with Pasta Top Vegetables Spread on Bread Marinate Meats			

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Directions

1. Stack basil leaves tightly and slice thinly using the chiffonade technique.
2. Peel and finely mince the garlic.
3. Place basil, garlic, optional herbs, nuts, and cheese in a blender container.
4. Blend while slowly drizzling in olive oil until emulsified.
5. Scrape down sides with spatula and blend briefly again.
6. Add lemon zest, lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Pulse to combine.
7. Taste and adjust seasoning. Serve immediately or refrigerate.

Chef Ron's Notes

Traditional pesto can be made with mortar and pestle for rustic texture.

Blanching basil briefly preserves bright green color.

Store pesto with thin layer of olive oil on top to prevent oxidation.

Pesto works beautifully as pasta sauce, vegetable garnish, marinade, or sandwich spread.

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