

Pesto

I know some of you may know how to make pesto, but I wanted to be sure. Also, there are other great variations that can be made to decrease the fat content and increase the nutrition level.

Ingredients:

Basil leaves (about 4 cups)

3-6 cloves of garlic (depends on how much you like)

Juice of 2-4 lemons

Salt

¼ - ½ cup extra virgin olive oil

1 cup pine nuts, or for a less fat alternative use sunflower seeds or pumpkin seeds

½ cup grated parmesan cheese, or for a vegan alternative use ½ cup raw cashews or ½ cup tofu

Preparation:

Lightly toast in a pan the pine nuts, or if using the sunflower or pumpkin seeds. The way to toast the seeds is to use a pan. Put it over a medium high heat and pour the nuts in. Move the nuts around with a wooden spoon until they turn slightly brown and get a nice nutty smell. Turn off heat and transfer to a bowl to cool.

In a food processor place the toasted nuts, whole garlic cloves, and cashews if using. Process till finely ground, add the basil leaves and begin processing, start by adding half the lemon juice and half the olive oil. Add about ½ tsp salt and the parmesan cheese or tofu if using (you will need a little more salt if using tofu), process for about 40 seconds. Try the pesto and add lemon juice and salt to taste and more oil for consistency. Add a little, process, then try it and adjust the seasoning.

If you want to cut even more down on fat, use only 2 tsp olive oil and replace the rest of the oil with water or vegetable broth, it really tastes just as delicious and has almost the same consistency.

Pesto can be used on pizzas, pasta, spread for bread or crackers. It also freezes well.

Options for pesto: add ½ cup sun dried tomatoes to the food processor, add more olive oil and some red wine vinegar to make a pesto salad dressing or dipping sauce for fresh bread, add arugula or replace the basil entirely with arugula.

Enjoy!