

Basil Pesto

A fresh, no-cook sauce made for a homegrown basil glut

DIFFICULTY Easy

COURSE Condiment

CUISINE Italian-inspired



PREP
10 min



COOK
5 min



TOTAL
15 min



SERVES
4



FREEZES WELL
Yes

01 Ingredients

- 60g fresh basil leaves, packed
- 50g pine nuts (or walnuts)
- 2 garlic cloves
- 50g parmesan, grated
- 125ml olive oil
- Salt and pepper, to taste

02 Method

1. Toast pine nuts in a dry pan over low heat for 2-3 minutes until golden, watching closely so they don't burn.
2. Add basil, toasted pine nuts, garlic, and parmesan to a food processor. Pulse until roughly chopped.
3. With the processor running, slowly drizzle in the olive oil until smooth but still with some texture.
4. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
5. Use immediately, or store with a thin layer of olive oil on top to prevent browning.

04 Common mistakes

- **Over-processing** — pulse rather than continuously blend; over-processing releases bitter compounds from the basil and heats the mixture, dulling the flavour.
- **Adding oil too fast** — drizzling it in slowly while the processor runs helps it emulsify properly instead of separating.
- **Skipping the toast** — raw pine nuts taste flat; toasting them first deepens the flavour.

03 Notes & substitutions

- Swap pine nuts for walnuts, cashews, or sunflower seeds - all work well.
- Swap parmesan for pecorino for a sharper, saltier result.
- No food processor? A mortar and pestle works too, and is the traditional method - just expect more effort.
- Vegetarian as written (check the parmesan is vegetarian-rennet if that matters to you).

05 Storage & leftovers

FRIDGE	Airtight container with a thin layer of oil on top, up to 5 days.
FREEZER	Freezes well in an ice cube tray, for up to 6 months.
SERVING	Stir through hot pasta off the heat, rather than cooking it directly - heat dulls the fresh flavour.