Basic Pesto Recipe and Variations

Basic Pesto

- 2 cups clean basil leaves (you can use all one variety or mixed varieties, according to your taste)
- 1/4 - 1/2 cup nuts. Pine nuts are traditional; walnuts are a more economical substitute.
- 1/2 cup grated hard cheese such as Parmesan or Romano, or a blend.
- 5-8 cloves of garlic, according to your taste
- Approximately 1/2 cup olive or other vegetable oil. This amount can vary depending on how much cheese and nuts you put in.

In a food processor or blender, add all ingredients and process until you have a smooth, well-mixed pesto. The consistency should be like mayonnaise. If the mix is too thick, add a little oil to thin it down. It won't be perfectly smooth.

To preserve the pesto, fill ice cube trays with the mixture and freeze it over night. The next day, remove the pesto cubes and store them in a plastic bag or tub in the freezer. One cube is one serving. Or, use an ice cream scoop or a spoon to make uniform sized servings and place them on waxed paper on a cookie sheet. Again, freeze overnight and then bag them.

Variations

- Red Basil pesto: There are several varieties of basil with red leaves. They make pesto into a conversation piece!

- Lemon Balm pesto: substitute lemon balm for half the basil. Substitute 2 table spoons lemon juice for an equal amount of the oil.

- Sage Pesto: use 1 1/2 cups sage and 1/2 cup parsley in place of the basil.

- Mint pesto: 2 cups of mint leaves, 3 sprigs of lemon verbena and 2 sprigs of parsley in place of the basil. Add ¼ to ½ teaspoon of sugar if desired.

- Use almonds in place of pine nuts or walnuts. Try varying the cheese. Use strong flavored, dry cheeses or you are apt to end up with a mess

Hummingbird Farm

HummingbirdFarm.net * Cindy Tibbetts
202 Bean Street Turner, Maine 04282
(207) 224-8220 hummingbird@megalink.net