

Classic Pesto

Pesto is a very flavorful sauce or seasoning that uses lots of fresh basil. Dried basil does not work in this recipe. You can get fresh basil at the Farmer's Market in large enough quantities to make this recipe. It is not low in fat or calories, but is very healthy because of all the healthy ingredients it contains!

4 cups loosely packed fresh basil leaves
½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
2 cloves garlic, peeled and cut in half
¼ teaspoon salt
½ cup pine nuts, toasted
½ cup olive oil

Method: Place the basil, cheese, garlic and salt in a food processor. Cover and pulse until chopped. Add nuts and cover and process until blended. While processing, gradually add oil in a slow stream until mixture is smooth and blended. Makes about 1 cup of pesto. Store in freezer or refrigerate for a day or two with surface lightly coated with olive oil to prevent darkening. Nutrition info. per 1 Tablespoon: 100 calories, 11 gm fat, 1.5 gm saturated fat, 160 mg. sodium, 1 gm carbohydrate, and 2 gm protein. (Recipe adapted from Taste of Home).

What to do with pesto? A little goes a long way, so freeze in small portions. The classic way to use pesto is to toss it with hot cooked pasta. Other ideas: toss with roasted vegetables as a seasoning. Spread on toasted French bread or baguettes as an appetizer. Spread on flour tortillas, cut into wedges, sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and bake until crispy for a tasty appetizer. Mix with some sour cream to make a dip for veggies. Use as pizza sauce for a simple pizza with fresh tomatoes and mozzarella cheese. Spread on your sandwich as a flavorful sandwich spread. Mix a little into meatloaf, mashed potatoes, casseroles, or soups. Use a small amount as stuffing for burgers, chicken breasts, etc.

Watermelon Ice Cubes

A perfect use for leftover watermelon! Use watermelon ice cubes in lemonade or soda to add a little fruity flavor, or use in your favorite cocktail.

2 cups chopped watermelon, seeds removed

Place watermelon in blender and blend until smooth. This amount will fill approximately one ice cube tray. You can place a mint leaf on top for a little extra color and flavor too. When frozen, place in plastic bag for longer storage. Each ice cube: about 5 calories and 1 gram of carbohydrate.

Cantaloupe Granita

What is a granita? It is an icy mixture of fruit, sugar and water, served as a light and refreshing dessert. It is simple to make and delectable, especially with a homegrown cantaloupe!

4 cups chopped fresh cantaloupe

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup granulated sugar

1 $\frac{1}{3}$ cups water (can use sparkling wine, such as Asti Spumante for an adult version)

2 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice

Method: Place all ingredients in blender and process until smooth. Place in an 8" baking dish and place in freezer. Stir every hour or so in the beginning so it freezes evenly. To serve, remove from freezer and let soften slightly, then scrape surface with a fork to make icy flakes, serve immediately. Makes 6 servings. Nutrition info per serving, using water: 130 calories, 0 fat, 20 mg. sodium, 34 gm carbohydrate, 1 gm fiber, 1 gm protein, as well as 70% of your daily recommended Vitamin C and Vitamin A. (Recipe from www.epicurious.com)

Delicious Zucchini Brownies

No one will believe that these brownies are low in fat, and contain some healthful ingredients too!

¼ cup applesauce
¼ cup vegetable oil, such as canola
1 and ½ cups sugar
1 large egg
2 teaspoons vanilla
1 cup all purpose flour
1 cup whole wheat flour
½ cup Dutch-process cocoa or regular natural cocoa
½ teaspoon baking soda (use 1 teaspoon if using regular cocoa)
1 teaspoon salt
2 cups shredded zucchini
½ cup chocolate chips or walnuts

Method: Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease and flour a 9 x 13” baking pan. In a large bowl, mix the applesauce, oil, sugar, egg and vanilla until well-blended. Combine the flours, cocoa, baking soda and salt. Stir into the sugar mixture. Fold in the zucchini and chocolate chips or walnuts, if using. Mixture will be stiff. Spread evenly into the prepared baking pan. Bake for 25-30 minutes until brownies spring back when touched gently. Cool completely, and cut into 24 squares. Dust with powdered sugar if desired. Nutrition info. per brownie: 82 calories, 4 gm fat, 1.4 gm fiber. (Recipe from King Arthur Flour Baking Sheet, summer, 2010).

Fresh Corn Cakes

These tasty pancakes make a wonderful side dish! Try them with barbecued chicken or ribs. They are best made with fresh corn, but you could also use frozen, thawed corn to have them all year round! Many people think of corn as just a starchy vegetable with not much nutrition, but actually corn is a good source of several B vitamins including folate, fiber, and antioxidants.

1 tablespoon butter
2 cups fresh corn kernels, cut from about 5 ears fresh corn
¼ cup finely chopped green pepper
¼ cup finely chopped onion
¼ cup all purpose flour
½ teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon pepper, or to taste
2 beaten eggs
2 tablespoons milk
2 dashes hot pepper sauce, such as Tabasco, if desired
Vegetable oil for frying

Method: In a medium skillet, melt butter. Add raw corn, green pepper and onion. Cook, stirring occasionally, for about 8 minutes, or until vegetables are tender. Cool slightly. In a mixing bowl, combine flour, baking powder, salt and pepper. Add eggs milk, and hot pepper sauce. Stir in slightly cooled vegetable mixture. In a large skillet or griddle, heat oil over medium heat. Drop corn mixture by heaping tablespoons into hot oil. Flatten slightly with the back of a spoon. Cook slowly until browned, about 4 minutes on each side. Be careful to keep heat on medium or lower so cakes do not brown too fast. Makes about 12 pancakes. Nutrition info. for each pancake: 84 calories, 2.4 gm protein, 10 gm carbs, 1 gm fiber, 4.5 gm total fat, 1 gm sat. fat and 157 mg. sodium. (Recipe from Favorite Recipes from Great Midwest Cooks, Meredith Books)