



Pestos (clockwise from top left): Walnut and arugula, sun-dried tomato, parsley and mint, and peppery romesco

THE RECIPES

Pesto Change-O!

Rich, colorful, out-of-the-ordinary combinations to bedazzle any dish—from saucy parsley-mint to tangy sun-dried tomato to spreadably unforgettable arugula-walnut (for story, see page 310).

All the pesto recipes below can be made in a food processor: Simply combine the ingredients and blend 20 to 30 seconds, to a coarse paste. Chef Michela Larson prefers crushing them in a mortar with a pestle, however—a slower process, which she finds results in a more aromatic, flavorful pesto.

Parsley and Mint Pesto

This is delicious with potato salad (page 330) or on a lamb sandwich with roasted peppers.

- ½ cup blanched whole almonds
- 1 small clove garlic, peeled
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- 1 cup packed fresh Italian parsley leaves
- ½ cup fresh mint leaves
- ½ cup fresh basil leaves
- ⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for storing
- 1½ Tbsp. crumbled ricotta salata
- ¼ tsp. freshly ground pepper

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Spread out almonds on a baking sheet; bake 8 to 10 minutes, or until fragrant and golden. Let cool.
2. Place garlic and salt in a mortar. Add about ⅓ of the almonds, parsley, mint, basil, and olive oil. Using a pestle, crush against bottom and sides of mortar until a coarse paste forms.
3. Working in batches, add another ⅓ of the almonds, parsley, mint, basil, and olive oil; crush as directed. Repeat with remaining batch. Stir in ricotta salata and pepper; transfer to an airtight container, cover with a layer of extra-virgin olive oil (to prevent oxidation), and refrigerate up to 3 days.
Makes ¾ cup.

Romesco Pesto

This recipe calls for only 4 cloves of roasted garlic; roast the whole head, then wrap the remainder in plastic and refrigerate for later use, either in another recipe or spread on toasted bread. Pair this pesto with grilled vegetables (page 330) or a roast beef sandwich.

- 1 head garlic
- ⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for storing
- 15 blanched whole almonds
- 1 large red bell pepper
- 1 jalapeño pepper
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- ¼ cup fresh mint leaves
- 1 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
- ¼ tsp. freshly ground pepper

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Cut off top quarter of garlic and place head on a sheet of foil; drizzle with 1 Tbsp. olive oil and fold foil to seal. Place in baking dish; bake 45 minutes, or until tender. Let cool. Meanwhile, spread out almonds on a baking sheet; bake 8 to 10 minutes, or until fragrant and golden. Let cool.
2. Turn a stove burner on high heat. Place peppers on burner and roast 12 to 15 minutes, turning regularly with tongs so peppers char evenly. Place in a paper ▶

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bag; seal and let stand (and steam) 5 minutes. Peel off blackened skin and discard. Cut peppers into quarters; remove and discard seeds and core.

3. Squeeze 4 cloves roasted garlic from their skins into a mortar. Add salt and $\frac{1}{2}$ of the almonds, peppers, mint, and $\frac{1}{2}$ of remaining olive oil. Using a pestle, crush against bottom and sides of mortar until a coarse paste forms.

4. Add remaining almonds, peppers, mint, and olive oil, crushing as directed. Stir in vinegar and ground pepper. Transfer to an airtight container, cover with a layer of extra-virgin olive oil, and refrigerate up to 5 days.

Makes $1\frac{1}{8}$ cups.

Sun-Dried-Tomato Pesto

This pesto stands up well to chicken and stronger-flavored fish, like bluefish.

1 small clove garlic, peeled
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. kosher salt
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup pine nuts
4 oil-packed sun-dried-tomato halves
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup packed fresh basil leaves
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh oregano leaves
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil,
plus more for storing
1 plum tomato (about 4 ounces),
blanched, peeled, and seeded
1 Tbsp. grated Pecorino Romano
cheese

1. Place garlic and salt in a mortar. Add about $\frac{1}{2}$ of the pine nuts, sun-dried tomatoes, basil, oregano, and olive oil. Using a pestle, crush against bottom and sides of mortar until a coarse paste forms.

2. Add remaining ingredients except cheese, crushing as directed. Stir in cheese. Transfer to an airtight container, cover with a layer of extra-virgin olive oil, and refrigerate up to 5 days.

Makes 1 cup.

Arugula and Walnut Pesto

A spoonful of this is the perfect accompaniment to balibut or other mild-flavored fish.

1 small clove garlic, peeled
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. kosher salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup walnuts
2 cups packed fresh arugula
leaves
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup packed fresh basil leaves
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil,
plus more for storing
2 Tbsp. grated Parmesan
cheese
1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice

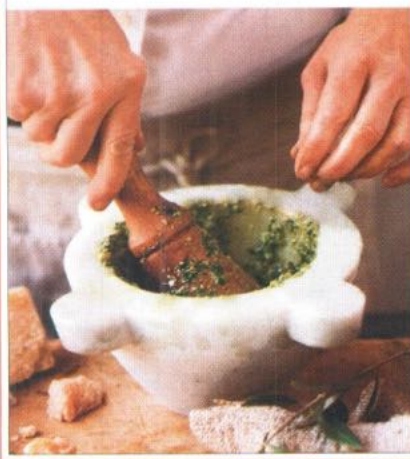
1. Place garlic and salt in a mortar. Add about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the walnuts, arugula, basil, and olive oil. Using a pestle, crush ingredients against bottom and sides of mortar until a coarse paste forms.

2. Working in batches, add another $\frac{1}{3}$ of the walnuts, arugula, basil, and olive oil, crushing as directed. Repeat with remaining batch. Stir in Parmesan and lemon juice; transfer to an airtight container, cover with a layer of extra-virgin olive oil, and refrigerate up to 3 days.

Makes 1 cup.

TOOL OF THE TRADE

Long before we had food processors, we had mortars and pestles: One of the oldest versions dates back 10,000 years. They've been used all over the world to make medicines, grind herbs and spices, and pulverize sauces. This large marble version, which Larson uses at home, is perfect for making pesto (\$80; williams-sonoma.com).



Grilled Vegetables with Romesco Pesto

4 leeks, green ends trimmed
2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. kosher salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. freshly ground pepper
2 medium zucchini, cut
diagonally into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-thick
slices
2 baby eggplants, cut diagonally
into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-thick slices
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup romesco pesto
(page 328)

1. Place leeks in a large bowl filled with cold water. Let stand 20 minutes; rinse under running water to flush out any remaining sand.

2. Preheat grill or grill pan to medium-high heat. In a large bowl, combine olive oil, salt, and pepper. Add zucchini and eggplant, tossing until coated.

3. Grill vegetables 8 to 10 minutes, turning occasionally, until leeks are charred and zucchini and eggplant are tender. Peel off charred leek leaves. Arrange all vegetables on a platter with romesco pesto in a bowl on the side. To eat, dip vegetables into romesco or spoon onto each one individually.

Makes 4 servings.

New Potato Salad with Parsley and Mint Pesto

$1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds small new potatoes,
scrubbed
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup parsley and mint pesto
(page 328)
2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
2 stalks celery, thinly sliced
on the diagonal
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped Kalamata olives
(about 10 pitted olives)
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup grated ricotta salata
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. kosher salt
 $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. freshly ground pepper

1. Place potatoes in a medium saucepan; add water to cover. Bring to simmer and cook 15 to 20 minutes, or until tender ➤

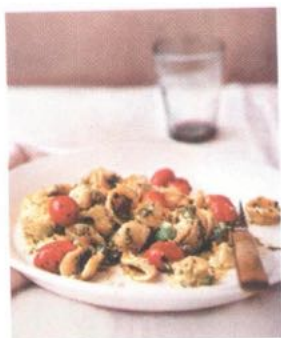
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when pierced with a knife. Drain in colander; cut potatoes in half when cool enough to handle.

2. In a large bowl, stir together pesto, oil, and vinegar. Add warm potatoes, celery, olives, ricotta salata, salt, and pepper. Gently toss until combined; serve warm.

Makes 4 servings.



Orecchiette with Arugula and Walnut Pesto

- ½ pound orecchiette pasta
- 3 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1½ medium zucchini, trimmed
- 1 pint (2 cups) grape tomatoes
- ½ cup arugula and walnut pesto (page 330)
- ⅓ cup fresh ricotta cheese
- 1 tsp. grated lemon zest
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- ⅛ tsp. freshly ground pepper
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook orecchiette according to package directions. Drain well and transfer to a large bowl; toss with 1½ Tbsp. olive oil.
2. Meanwhile, cut zucchini in half lengthwise and then in half again to form spears. Slice crosswise into ½-inch pieces. In a large skillet set over medium-high heat, heat remaining olive oil. Add zucchini and cook 4 minutes or until just soft, stirring occasionally. Add tomatoes and cook 2 to 3 minutes more, stirring occasionally.
3. Reduce heat to medium low. Stir in orecchiette, pesto, ricotta, lemon zest, salt, and pepper until combined.

Remove from heat and stir in Parmesan; serve immediately.

Makes 4 servings.

Warm Chicken Sandwiches with Sun-Dried-Tomato Pesto

- 4 boneless skinless chicken breast halves (about 1½ pounds)
- 2 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- ⅛ tsp. freshly ground pepper
- ⅛ tsp. red pepper flakes
- 1 large red bell pepper
- 4 (4-ounce) ciabatta loaves, halved lengthwise
- ½ cup sun-dried-tomato pesto (page 330)
- 8 slices (about 4 ounces) Fontina cheese
- 1 bunch fresh arugula

1. Preheat oven to 400°. Place chicken on a foil-lined rimmed baking sheet. Rub with oil and season with salt, pepper, and pepper flakes. Bake 15 to 20 minutes, until juices run clear when pierced with a knife or temperature registers 165° on a meat thermometer. When cool enough to handle, cut chicken into ½-inch-thick slices.
 2. Meanwhile, turn a stove burner on high heat. Place bell pepper on burner and roast 12 to 15 minutes, turning regularly with tongs so pepper chars evenly. Place in a paper bag; seal and let stand (and steam) 5 minutes. Peel off blackened skin and discard. Cut pepper into quarters; remove and discard seeds and core.
 3. Open sandwich loaves and spread about 1 Tbsp. pesto on each slice. Top the bases of each loaf with Fontina, red pepper, arugula, chicken, and another slice of Fontina, dividing evenly. Place tops on sandwiches.
 4. In a preheated panini maker, press sandwiches for 6 minutes, or until heated through. Alternatively, preheat oven to 400°. Place sandwiches on a baking sheet and bake about 6 minutes. Serve immediately.
- Makes 4 sandwiches.*