

Pesto Chicken Pasta with Early Summer Vegetables

4 cups loosely packed basil leaves, washed and dried
2 cloves garlic, smashed
½ cup pine nuts, toasted
¼ cup grated parmesan cheese (good quality)
1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar
1 – 2 teaspoons salt, or to taste
1 teaspoon white pepper, or to taste
1 to 1 ½ cups olive oil (extra virgin preferred)



METHOD

1. Place all ingredients EXCEPT oil and cheese into the bowl of a food processor; puree until smooth, about 20 – 30 seconds
2. With machine running, drizzle in oil, using enough to make a loose paste
3. Add cheese and just pulse briefly to combine; taste and adjust seasoning
4. Cover very tightly (it is a good idea to place a layer of plastic wrap directly on top of the surface of the pesto before putting the lid on the container)
5. Store up to a week in an air-tight container

*For a greener, healthier pesto, quickly sauté 2 cups baby spinach leaves just until wilted with a little olive oil, garlic, salt and pepper; cool completely, then add to the processor with the basil leaves and follow recipe as written

Toss pesto with cooked fusilli or campanelle pasta, diced roasted red peppers, sautéed mushrooms and diced caramelized onions; add grilled, diced chicken if you'd like! Season to taste, preferably with Taste-full Salt Blend, and enjoy either hot or chilled with a nice Sauvignon Blanc!