

FREEZER PESTO

LOVE STARTS IN THE KITCHEN!™

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RITA ON THE WEB!

Log onto my website: www.Abouteating.com

When the garden delivers its bounty of basil and parsley, make this and store in the freezer for gift giving during the holidays. From my book *Gifts without Ribbons*. Using organic olive oil and butter from the **Natural Foods Department** elevates this pesto into something WOW!

- 1 to 1½ teaspoons garlic, minced
- ¼ cup pine nuts, toasted
- 1/2 stick unsalted butter (optional but good)
- ½ cup parsley leaves
- 4 cups basil leaves, packed
- 1-1/2 cups Parmesan cheese or to taste
- 1/2 to 3/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

With motor running, add garlic and nuts. Now add butter and process until blended. Add parsley and basil and pulse until chopped finely. Add cheese and blend again. Slowly add olive oil and process until well blended.

To store: Either fill ice cube tray sections, or use a small scoop or tablespoon and scoop out portions on a foil/waxed paper lined/permanent baking mat lined cookie sheet. Freeze until hard and place in freezer-safe containers. Use in pastas, pizzas, polenta (fabulous dolloped on top of polenta that you've cooked with a bit of garlic and Romano cheese), soups, stews, sandwiches, appetizers – you name it – pesto is good on just about anything!

To make “Pistou” - Leave the pine nuts out.

Variations: Use walnuts instead of pine nuts

Toasting Pine Nuts: Lay in single layer on cookie sheet. Bake at 325-250 until fragrant and golden, 7-10 minutes.

Fresh Mozzarella Tomato Crostini with Oregano

Preheat oven to 350. Brush French bread slices with olive oil on one side. Place in oven just until bread starts to color, about 3-5 minutes. Remove. Spread a layer of pesto on each. Top with a slice of fresh mozzarella.

Place thinly sliced tomatoes on top of cheese. Brush with olive oil and sprinkle very lightly with fresh minced oregano or dried oregano (use a light hand with oregano since it is strongly flavored). Sprinkle lightly with freshly ground pepper and sea salt. Transfer sheet to oven and bake until bread is thoroughly heated and mozzarella starts to melt, about 5 minutes. Or run under broiler. Top with basil leaf, if desired and serve.

MORE RITA!

Check out my books *Gifts without Ribbons, Culinary Herbs that Heal Body and Soul, The Official Snack Guide for Beleaguered Sports parents and Sports Nutrition for Dummies* (I developed the recipes) and also my yummy bread blends.

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Rita Heikenfeld

RITA'S HERB TIP OF THE WEEK: GARLIC!

Yes, since an herb is classified as “any useful plant” garlic certainly fills the bill! But this time of year, garlic tends to sprout – and when that happens, some chefs feel like the green shoot that comes from the head of garlic is bitter. I personally like it, but if you don't, you can use that clove of garlic that has sprouted in a novel way: plant it! Just peel the clove, put into some good soil, leaving the tip of the clove with the green shoot above the soil, water well, put in a sunny window and viola – soon you'll have your own garlic plant with beautiful and edible green leaves. Now these shoots/leaves will be less pungent than regular garlic. Garlic is great for the cardiovascular system, so eat it as much as you can!