

Kale Pesto

You may not go back to the traditional basil pesto after trying this delicious, healthful version with dark leafy greens.

- fresh garlic (5-10 cloves, to taste), peeled
- 1/2 cup sunflower seeds
- 3 cups blanched, drained and squeezed kale or other dark leafy greens (approximately 3 large bunches fresh)
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil plus extra for topping
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- zest from 1/3 lemon
- 1 pound dried whole wheat pasta (such as penne or cavatappi)

Place garlic cloves and sunflower seeds in the bowl of a food processor fitted with a metal blade. Pulse until finely chopped. Add in the cooked and drained greens and pulse until finely chopped and combined with the nuts and garlic.

Scrape into a mixing bowl. Stir in the olive oil, cheese, salt and pepper and lemon zest if using.

Toss 1 cup pesto with 1 pound cooked whole wheat pasta.

May be refrigerated for up to 1 week, or frozen for several months. Thaw before serving.

To blanch greens: Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Remove tough stems and discard. Roughly chop the greens and place in boiling water for about 5 minutes. Place in a bowl with ice water to stop cooking. Drain well and squeeze out extra moisture before making pesto.

Note: Spread the Kale Pesto on Italian bread and lightly toast for an alternative to garlic bread!