



Pesto Genovese

Although pesto means 'to pound', this classic Ligurian sauce, from the port city of Genoa, is traditionally made by using a wooden pestle to crush – rather than pound – the ingredients in a marble mortar. Crushing the basil this way releases the maximum aroma and flavour and allows the cook to smell each ingredient as it's added, so they can adjust to taste, because each batch of basil, garlic, and even cheese, is slightly different. Today, most people use a food processor, which is an acceptable shortcut if you just pulse the ingredients for the minimum time, so they don't heat up.

Makes about ½ cup (serves 4 as a pasta sauce)



INGREDIENTS

- 40 small basil leaves, stems removed
- 1 small clove garlic, peeled
- Salt flakes, to taste
- 1 tablespoon pine nuts
- 2 tablespoons freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano (about 6g/¼oz)
- 2 tablespoons freshly grated young Pecorino Sardo (about 6g/¼oz)
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil (80ml)

METHOD

1. Pinch any stems off the basil.
2. Cut garlic in half, remove and discard the centre germ, chop roughly.
3. Place basil, garlic, a good pinch of salt, pine nuts, Parmigiano and Pecorino in the bowl of a small food processor with about half the oil and pulse to combine.
4. Add remaining oil and pulse just enough to form a paste.
5. If you're not using the pesto immediately, refrigerate pesto in a sterilised glass jar with a little olive oil drizzle over the top to protect it from oxidising.