

Pesto Pasta Recipe

Ingredients:

- 12 oz pasta of your choice (spaghetti, penne, or fusilli work great)
- 2 cups fresh basil leaves, packed
- ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
- ⅓ cup pine nuts (or walnuts as a budget-friendly swap)
- 2 garlic cloves
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- Optional: squeeze of fresh lemon juice for brightness

Instructions:

- 1. Cook the pasta**
 - Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil.
 - Add pasta and cook according to package directions until al dente.
 - Reserve ½ cup of pasta water, then drain.
- 2. Make the pesto**
 - In a food processor, combine basil, Parmesan, pine nuts, and garlic.
 - Pulse until finely chopped.
 - Slowly drizzle in olive oil while blending until smooth.
 - Season with salt, pepper, and optional lemon juice to taste.
- 3. Combine pasta and pesto**
 - Return the drained pasta to the pot.
 - Add the pesto and toss until evenly coated.
 - If it feels too thick, add a splash of reserved pasta water until creamy.
- 4. Serve**
 - Garnish with extra Parmesan, a few basil leaves, or toasted pine nuts.
 - Enjoy warm or as a chilled pasta salad!

👉 Variations:

- Add grilled chicken or shrimp for protein.
- Stir in cherry tomatoes, arugula, or roasted veggies for extra flavor.
- Swap basil for kale or spinach if you want a different twist.