

*The New York Times***Diner's Journal****Notes on Eating, Drinking and Cooking**

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Pasta with pesto has become a staple, but it does have its limits. The delicious, strongly flavored sauce must be used in such small quantities that it adds practically nothing in the way of bulk to the dish. The Genoese, originators of pesto, must have figured this out centuries ago, when they created this dish.

**Trenette With Pesto***Yield* 4 to 6 servings*Time* 30 minutes*Summary*

I prefer to use waxier potatoes here, like tiny fingerlings or Yukon gold. Any kind of string beans will work, although thinner beans, like delicate, flavorful haricots verts, should be added a minute or two later than common string beans. Finally, almost every pasta dish in Liguria is served with a final sprinkling of good olive oil. This one will definitely benefit from that treatment, especially if the sauce seems dry.

*Ingredients*

2 cups basil leaves

2 cloves garlic, peeled

Salt to taste

1/2 cup grated pecorino romano or other hard sheep's-milk cheese, or Parmesan

1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil, or more

2 tablespoons pine nuts

2 medium potatoes, about 1/2 pound, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes

1 pound trenette or linguine

1/2 pound string beans, trimmed and cut into 1-inch lengths

*Method*

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil, and salt it. Combine the basil, garlic, salt and cheese in a blender or food processor; pulse until roughly chopped. Add the olive oil in a steady stream, and continue to blend until the mixture is fairly creamy, adding a little more olive oil or some water if necessary. Add the pine nuts, and pulse a few times to chop them into the sauce.
2. Add the potatoes to the boiling water, and stir; then add the pasta, and cook as usual, stirring frequently, about 10 minutes in all. When the pasta is about half done -- the strands will bend but are not yet tender -- add the string beans.
3. When the pasta is done, the potatoes and beans should be tender. Drain the pasta and vegetables, toss with pesto and more salt or olive oil if you like, and serve.

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