

PESTO BIANCO

INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup walnut halves
2 cloves garlic
10 basil leaves, chopped
Leaves from 1 sprig marjoram
2 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon fine sea salt Freshly ground white pepper
1 1/2 cups well-drained whole milk ricotta

A few tablespoons whole milk or half-and-half (optional; for sauce) 450g
pasta, such as fettuccine, spaghetti, penne, cavatelli, or orecchetti

1/2 cup Parmigiano-Reggiano, plus more for serving

METHOD

~~STEP 1~~ Preheat the oven to 180C.

~~STEP 2~~ Bake the walnuts on a small baking sheet and bake for 5 to 7 minutes, until they have turned a shade darker and are fragrant. Let them sit until cool enough to handle, then rub off as much of the thin skins as possible.

~~STEP 3~~ In a food processor or blender, blitz the nuts to grind them up. Add the herbs, oil, salt and pepper and process or blend again. Add the ricotta and process/blend briefly to incorporate the ingredients. Transfer to a bowl and stir vigorously to incorporate air and make the pesto fluffy.

~~STEP 4~~ Using immediately, spoon the pesto into a container with an air-tight lid and refrigerate. Otherwise, if you're going to use the pesto as a sauce for pasta, transfer it to a bowl and stir in 3 or 4 tablespoons of whole milk to loosen it.

~~SERVING INSTRUCTIONS~~ To use pesto, bring a pot of water to a rolling boil and salt it generously. Cook the pasta (I used a shape called 'rocchetti' which is, essentially, large cavatelli) until al dente. Drain, reserving a little of the cooking water, and return the pasta to the pot. Spoon the pesto into the pasta (you might not use all the pesto) and stir to incorporate it. Stir in the Parmigiano and add a splash or two of the pasta water to loosen the sauce if necessary. Spoon into bowls and serve with more Parmigiano for sprinkling on top.

THE COOKERY

by The Secret Jozi Chef

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