
Basil 101

Tastes like summer.



There are many varieties of basil. We grow Basil Genovese, the traditional green variety. Try chopping it and adding to butter, cream cheese, or your favorite pasta sauce. Make a batch of pesto or simply puree extra basil with a bit of olive oil and freeze it in ice cube trays. It pairs well with tomatoes, eggplant, peppers, green beans and summer squash. Because it is so fragile, it is best to add basil near the end of a dish's cooking time.



How to store:

Basil is very sensitive to cold. Do not refrigerate fresh basil; it will turn black. To keep just-harvested basil fresh, strip the lower leaves off the stems and place stems in a glass of water on the kitchen counter. Wrap the stripped leaves (or all your basil if your fresh basil arrives w/o adequate stems) in a dry paper towel and keep in an airtight container at about 50 degrees or room temperature.



Substitutes:

oregano, thyme

How to Prep:

Wash and spin dry just before use. Chop leaves and stems to desired size. Basil is a finishing herb, and is therefore added near the end of cooking to maximize flavor and keep the delicate leaves from wilting.

Pairs well with:

Tomato, garlic, mozzarella cheese, mint, olive oil, balsamic vinegar, beans, pasta, goat cheese, cream cheese, parmesan, eggplant, peppers, summer squash, lemon, fruit, pizza

Best Uses:

Pesto

Bruschetta

Garnish on drinks or dishes
Basil Dressing
Pizza
Soup

Frittata
Salad Dressings
Basil Salad
Basil Chicken

Freezing Basil:

Purée the basil first. Whirl the basil in a blender with a bit of olive oil to make a thick puree. Freeze this in small covered containers or in a clean ice cube tray. Once frozen through, transfer the cubes to a sealable plastic bag for long-term storage in the freezer (up to 6 months).

Dehydrating Basil:

Remove leaves from stem and place on a piece of paper towel on a glass plate. Cover with another piece of paper towel. Microwave plate on high for 1 minute. Leaves will be dry. Crinkle them with your finger and place them in a dry container, such as a Mason jar with a lid. Use within 6 months. Soup Pizza topping Pesto Sauces Noodle or Rice Bowl Italian dishes & pastas Dried Cocktails Salads Dressing or Dip Salsa Bruschetta Sushi or spring rolls Compound Butter Sandwiches or Wraps Marinade for Grilling Basil is also grown in purple varieties.

Suggested Recipes:

Basic Basil Pesto

Adapted from alexandracooks.com

Ingredients:

3 cups herbs such as basil, cilantro, parsley, chives, etc., rinsed

1/4 cup nuts such as almonds, walnuts or pine nuts

2 cloves garlic

1 tsp. freshly-squeezed lemon juice (I juiced half a lemon)

3/4 tsp. kosher salt

1 tsp. freshly-ground pepper

1/2 cup olive oil

1/2 cup grated dry salty cheese such as Pecorino or Parmigiano Reggiano

Directions:

Combine all ingredients in a food processor and purée until nicely blended. Taste and adjust seasoning as necessary. Pour this over a tomato salad. Tastes like summer to me!

Basil Vinaigrette Dressing

Adapted from www.FoodandWine.com

Ingredients:

- 1 small garlic clove
- 1 cup packed basil leaves, coarsely chopped
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 1/2 tablespoons Champagne vinegar
- Pinch of crushed red pepper
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Directions:

In a food processor, pulse the garlic until chopped. Add the basil and pulse until finely chopped. Add the oil, vinegar and crushed red pepper and process until smooth. Season with salt and pepper

One-Pot Baked Ziti with Sausage and Spinach

Adapted from [Cooks Country](#) (Serves 4 to 6)

Ingredients:

- 8 ounces sweet Italian sausage, casings removed (or just use ground sausage)
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 (28-ounce) can tomato sauce
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can diced tomatoes
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 2 cups water

12 ounces (3 3/4 cups) ziti

6 tablespoons chopped fresh basil

7 ounces (7 cups) baby spinach, chopped coarse

6 ounces whole-milk mozzarella cheese, cut into 1/4-inch pieces (1 1/2 cups)

2 ounces Parmesan cheese, grated (1 cup)

8 ounces (1 cup) whole-milk ricotta cheese

Directions:

Cook sausage in Dutch oven over medium-high heat, breaking up pieces with spoon, until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in tomato sauce, diced tomatoes and their juice, salt, oregano, sugar, and pepper flakes. Bring mixture to boil, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer until thickened, about 10 minutes. Stir in water, pasta, and 4 tablespoons basil. Increase heat to high and bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium and simmer vigorously, uncovered, until pasta is still very firm but just starting to soften, 6 to 8 minutes, stirring frequently. Adjust oven rack 8 inches from broiler element and heat broiler. Remove pot from heat and stir in spinach, 3/4 cup mozzarella, and 1/2 cup Parmesan. Dollop surface of pasta evenly with spoonfuls of ricotta. Top with remaining 3/4 cup mozzarella and 1/4 cup Parmesan. 4. Broil ziti until cheese is bubbling and beginning to brown, 5 to 7 minutes. Transfer to wire rack and let cool for 10 minutes. Sprinkle with remaining 2 tablespoons basil and serve

Bruschetta with Tomatoes and Basil

Recipe from Cook's Illustrated, September 1996

Bruschetta is a classic appetizer, and it's easy to prepare. Although this recipe calls for country bread, I also like to use baguette slices for a smaller appetizer portion. Total time required: about 20 minutes. Makes 8 appetizer portions.

Ingredients:

4 medium tomatoes, cored and cut into 1/2-inch dice

1/3 cup green basil leaves, shredded

Salt and ground black pepper

1 loaf country bread (approximately a 12-by-5-inch loaf), sliced crosswise into 1-inch thick pieces, ends removed

1 large clove garlic, peeled

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Directions:

Heat broiler or light grill fire. Mix tomatoes, basil, and salt and pepper to taste in medium bowl. Set aside. Broil or grill bread until golden brown on both sides. Place toast slices on large platter, rub garlic over tops, then brush with oil. Use slotted spoon to divide tomato mixture among toast slices. Serve immediately.

Panzanella Salad

This is the classic salad my friend brings out once a year and they always get raving reviews. Use either green or purple basil. Serves 4.

Ingredients:

6 cups rustic Italian or French bread, cut or torn into 1-inch pieces (1/2 to 1 pound)

1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil

Salt and pepper

1 1/2 pounds tomatoes, cored, seeded, and cut into 1-inch pieces

3 tablespoons red wine vinegar

1 cucumber, peeled, halved lengthwise, seeded, and sliced thin 1 shallot, sliced thin

1/4 cup chopped fresh basil

Directions:

Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 400 degrees. Toss bread pieces with 2 tablespoons oil and 1/4 teaspoon salt; arrange bread in single layer on rimmed baking sheet. Toast bread pieces until just starting to turn light golden, 15 to 20 minutes, stirring halfway through. Set aside to cool to room temperature. Gently toss tomatoes and 1/2 teaspoon salt in large bowl. Transfer to colander and set over bowl; set aside to drain for 15 minutes, tossing occasionally. Whisk remaining 6 tablespoons oil, vinegar, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper into reserved tomato juices. Add bread pieces, toss to coat, and let stand for 10 minutes, tossing occasionally. Add tomatoes, cucumber, shallot, and basil to bowl with bread pieces and toss to coat. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and serve immediately.

Pasta with Citrus Cream Sauce and Basil

Adapted from Rachael Ray.

We love this recipe. It makes great use of your basil and mint. It only makes 2 servings. Double the recipe for a larger family or to have leftovers.

Ingredients:

1/2 t. coarse salt plus more for pasta water

1/2 lb. linguini

1 c. heavy cream

2 tablespoons cognac or dry sherry

Grated zest of 1 lemon

Grated zest of 1 orange

2 T. chopped fresh mint

12 fresh basil leaves, torn

1/2 c. grated Parmesan

Directions:

Put a large pot of water over high heat for the pasta. When water boils, add salt and linguini. Cook according to package directions to al dente. Drain. In a skillet over medium-low heat, warm cream. Stir in cognac or sherry, zests of lemon and orange, and salt. Simmer, 7-10 minutes. Add mint and basil. Toss hot, drained pasta with sauce and grated cheese. Serve.