

You will need: a food processor fitted with a blade attachment; several bunches of fresh basil (enough for about 4 cups of tightly packed basil leaves); a big handful of finely grated Parmesan cheese (about 1/2 cup); a small handful of toasted pine nuts (you can quickly toast raw nuts in a dry frying pan over medium-low heat for a few minutes); a medium clove of garlic, minced; salt; 1/3 cup good-quality olive oil

Step
1

Remove the basil leaves from the thick stems.

Step
2

Put the basil leaves, cheese, pine nuts, garlic, and two pinches of salt in the bowl of the food processor.

Step
3

While the food processor is running, add the olive oil in a continuous thin stream until it's incorporated.

Step
4

Stop the motor, scrape down the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula, and pulse to combine any remaining large pieces. This makes about one heaping cup of pesto. Use it on pizza in place of tomato sauce, serve it slathered on roasted fish or chicken, or stir it into cooked pasta or soup.

*From the store to the kitchen to the table: The Basics outline the steps that get you from raw ingredients to your dinner tonight, free of complicated techniques. It's a method you'll remember and whip out whenever you like. It is the most basic way to make the thing you're making.

Illustrations by Bill Russell. Find this online at www.chow.com/stories/12224.