**Jalapeño Pesto Pasta with Flaked Speckled Trout**

**INGREDIENTS:**

**JALAPEÑO PESTO SAUCE:**
- 1/2 c fresh basil
- 1/4 c fresh cilantro
- 1/4 c fresh mint
- 1 large jalapeño, seeded and quartered
- 1 to 2 cloves garlic
- 1/2 yellow onion, quartered
- 1/4 c grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 c fresh lime juice
- 1/2 tsp Cajun seasoning
- 1/4 tsp ground black pepper
- 1/2 c extra virgin olive oil

**TROUT:**
- 6 speckled trout filets
- Cajun seasoning
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp butter

**TO SERVE:**
- 1 lb penne pasta
- 1/4 c crumbled goat cheese
- Salt and pepper

**GARNISH:**
- Crumbled goat cheese
- Fresh basil, chopped

**PREPARATION:**

**JALAPEÑO PESTO SAUCE:**
Place the basil, cilantro, mint, jalapeño, garlic, onion, Parmesan, lime juice, Cajun seasoning, black pepper and olive oil in a large food processor. Pulse and blend to incorporate all ingredients into a pesto sauce. Set aside.

**TROUT:**
Season your filets on both sides with a light dusting of Cajun seasoning. Add butter and oil to a large nonstick skillet over medium high heat. As butter melts, swirl your pan to incorporate with the oil. Once hot, add all filets and cook till opaque in the middle, about 4-5 minutes per side. Once finished cooking, remove from heat and lightly break up your filets in the skillet with a spatula or fork.

**TO SERVE:**
Cook the pasta according to box directions, reserving 1 cup of its cooking water before draining.
Toss the pasta with 1/4 cup of the cooking water, three-fourths of the pesto sauce and half of the flaked, cooked trout. Add more of the pasta water or pesto sauce if the pasta seems dry. Finally, gently fold in the remaining flaked trout and crumbled goat cheese. Season with salt and pepper if needed.
Serve immediately, plate pasta and garnish with crumbled goat cheese and fresh chopped basil.

- Recipe and photos by Heather Peterek, Staff Seafood Enthusiast

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