

## INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups (120 g) fresh basil leaves, lightly packed (or herb of your choice)
- 1 cup (100 g) fresh Parmesan cheese (you can use dehydrated Parmesan, but freshly-grated is better!)
- 1 cup (235 ml) olive oil
- 1 clove fresh garlic, minced (optional)

## EQUIPMENT

- Blender or food processor

## SAFETY TIPS AND HINTS

Don't blend in vain! Stop the blender periodically to push the leaves down with a wooden spoon.

### CHALLENGE LEVEL



### TIME

15 minutes

### YIELD

Around 2 cups pesto



Fig. 5: Mix with your favorite pasta.

**BURSTING WITH FLAVOR, THIS VERDANT SAUCE MADE FROM FRESH BASIL IS DELICIOUS ON EVERYTHING FROM POTATO CHIPS TO BOW-TIE PASTA. AFTER YOU TRY IT WITH BASIL, EXPERIMENT WITH YOUR FAVORITE HERBS TO CREATE A CUSTOM BLEND.**



Fig. 1: Wash the basil.



Fig. 2: Add the ingredients to the blender.



Fig. 3: Use a spoon to smash the leaves down.



Fig. 4: Blend until smooth.



Fig. 6: Enjoy!



## THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE FOOD:

Blending basil and garlic breaks up their cells, releasing wonderful flavors that will liven up any dish. Oil prevents the basil from coming into contact with oxygen, preserving its beautiful bright green color.

Garlic belongs to the plant genus *Allium* and is related to lilies. Members of this family contain an element called sulfur. Blending up garlic cells allows chemical scissors called enzymes to interact with other garlic chemicals, releasing the smell and flavor that most people associate with raw garlic.

## RECIPE

1. Wash the basil well, rinse it and pat it dry. **(Fig. 1)**
2. Add the garlic, basil, Parmesan, and oil to the blender or food processor. **(Fig. 2)**
3. Blend until smooth. You may have to stop the blender and push down on the basil with a spoon a few times. **(Fig. 3, 4)**
4. Serve pesto as a dip or use it as pizza or pasta sauce. **(Fig. 5, 6)**
5. Store refrigerated or freeze pesto in an ice cube tray to use later.

### CREATE AND COMBINE

Make your own pasta (Lab 22) or pizza dough (Lab 24) to enjoy with the pesto.

Experiment with other green sauces, such as chimichurri, by blending other herbs. Choose one strong-flavored herb (such as basil, mint, or dill) and mix it with milder herbs (such as parsley or chives). You can also play with the texture of the green sauce by chopping herbs by hand.