



Basil

How to Prepare

Basil is a culinary herb with a history going back thousands of years. There are many varieties of basil grown all around the world, and its applications are as diverse as the flavours it contributes to foods. In North America we frequently encounter Mediterranean varieties such as Genovese or Mammoth Basil, and Asian varieties such as Thai Basil, and Anise Basil. Basil is such a diverse cooking herb that it even contains some hybrid breeds such as Holy Basil or Lemon Basil.

The Mediterranean varieties tend to have a bold bright flavour, and are best when fresh. Asian varieties have a slightly stronger flavour, often having a hint of licorice, anise, or clove flavour. Basil can be dried, but it loses much of its bold flavour. It freezes well, especially if first made into a paste with olive oil.

When working with fresh basil, gently wash leaves in cool water, then dry with a colander or salad spinner. Basil can be stored in the fridge, wrapped in paper towel. They can also be treated like flowers, and stored in a countertop vase in sunny conditions.

Try Using Basil:

- In Pesto;
- In Caprese Salads;
- As a pizza topping (Margherita);
- Added at the last moment to a stir-fry, or noodle bowl;
- In pasta sauces;
- Infused in olive oil;
- In bruschetta;
- In a watermelon & feta salad;
- As a garnish for soups;
- In seafood dishes; and
- In desserts like sorbet.

Nutrition Highlights

- Low calorie;
- A source of vitamin A and C;
- A source of many other vitamins;
- A source of dietary fiber.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 ounce 28g (1 ounce (28g))	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 6	Calories from Fat 1
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 1mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 1g	0%
Dietary Fiber 0g	2%
Sugars 0g	
Protein 1g	
Vitamin A 30%	Vitamin C 8%
Calcium 5%	Iron 5%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

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Recipe: Nut-Free Pesto

This basil pesto keeps all the bold Mediterranean flavour, but replaces pine nuts with toasted pumpkin seeds for a nut-free recipe that can be used as a sauce, spread or dip.

If you have basil planted in your garden and you find yourself with a surplus, you can make a big batch of pesto and freeze it. You can enjoy pesto throughout the winter if you plan ahead.

Ingredients

- ½ cup pumpkin seeds, toasted
- ¼ lb spinach leaves (2 cups, packed)
- ¼ lb basil leaves (2 cups, packed)
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp pepper
- 3 cloves garlic

1. Lightly toast pumpkin seeds in a dry skillet on medium heat until light brown;
2. Add all ingredients to a food processor. Blend until smooth.
3. If you don't have a food processor, many immersion blenders come with a processor attachment.
4. Store in the fridge for up to 1 week.

Recipe: Caprese Salad

This classic salad has stood the test of time, and is the embodiment of summer in many Mediterranean households.

Present this recipe like an open-faced sandwich with layers of vibrant red, white and green.

Ingredients

- 2 large fresh tomatoes
- 1 16oz ball of fresh mozzarella
- 16 fresh basil leaves
- Olive oil
- Salt

1. Slice the tomatoes into ½" slices
2. Slice the mozzarella into ¼" slices
3. Place the mozzarella over the tomato slice, then place the basil leaf over the mozzarella
4. Drizzle the stack with olive oil
5. Add a pinch of salt