

Cilantro Walnut Pesto

By Jessica Wilson

➡ A few weeks ago, we had a bumper crop of cilantro and a whole lotta left over penne hanging out in the fridge. I had made a cilantro pesto years ago and thought, “Why not try it again?” After a perusal of the cheese drawer I discovered we only had Swiss and aged gouda. Choosing the gouda, an adventure began.

This is a young and spicy pesto that tastes excellent hot or cold. It is delightful on pasta or smeared on a hunk of bread or as a spread on a sandwich — truly versatile. I recommend following my recipe as a base, as you may not want yours as garlic-spicy as mine, or you may choose to not dance with as much of the gouda. Either way, have a go of it and enjoy!



Ingredients

1 cup packed cilantro, chopped

½ cup to 1 cup walnuts

1–2 oz aged gouda not young; you need a hard cheese for pesto

3 tablespoons olive oil

Juice from one lemon

2 garlic cloves

Food processor a blender would work as well; just chop your ingredients up first

Rubber spatula/scrapper

Small glass container with lid

Directions

Step 1: Assemble your ingredients beforehand to make it easier to process. Slice your lemon and peel your garlic too.

Step 2: Rinse your cilantro and chop coarsely. If the stems are not too woody, go for it and toss those into the mix as well. Cilantro that has begun to flower is totally fine to use as well; the blossoms themselves are pretty tasty.

Step 3: Add the whole shebang to the bowl of your food processor, lock the lid on, and process away, scraping down the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula every few rounds or so.

Step 4 (optional): Eyeball your pesto. It will resemble the texture of wasabi and be almost as bright. Add a little more cilantro, oil, and/or lemon juice to taste. If you would prefer it to be thinner, add a little more olive oil (by the tablespoon). You may salt it if you wish, but the garlic and cheese will flavor it up big time. Yields about one cup.

Step 5: Scoop out into a glass container and store in fridge until ready to use. Or if you just can't wait, add a dollop to a bowl of pasta and enjoy!