

Sorrel and Cress Pesto with Sauteed Cardoon, Rapini and Pasta

Pesto can be made year round with any greens or herbs, combined with any nuts or seeds. This version features early spring greens, citrusy sorrel and spicy cress, served with sauteed cardoons and rapini / rabe.

- Natasha and Nathan, Canby Farm and Kitchen

Ingredients

Cardoon - 1 Lb
Rapini / Rabe of choice - 2 bunches
Sorrel - 2 bunches
Cress - 2 bunches
Sunflower seeds - ¼ lb (other nuts will work)
Parmesan cheese - 1/4 lb
Garlic - 1 head / or adjust to your taste
Olive oil - ½ cup
Lemons - 2
Pasta - 1/2 lb
Chili flakes - 1/2 tsp / to taste
Salt
Pepper

Directions

Preheat oven to 350.

Clean the cardoons and cut off the leaves, use just the cardoon stems / stalks. Discard the feathery section at the center of the cardoon (looks like a celery heart).

Put a large pot of heavily salted water on to boil. The water should be salty like the ocean, this takes the bitterness out of the cardoons.

Chop the cardoons into bite sized pieces.

Add the cardoons to the boiling water, and adjust heat to cook the cardoons at an active simmer.

Do NOT cook cardoons at a hard boil, this will damage the texture and zap the nutrients.

Cook approx 45 minutes at an active simmer.



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Directions continued

Rinse the rapini / rabe. Chop into bite sized pieces, set aside.

Clean the cress and sorrel. Tear / trim off the bottom of the stems. Remove any yellow leaves from the cress. Cress stems are good to include - they have lots of flavor.

Prep garlic - we love garlic and use a whole head! Separate cloves, peel and crush garlic. Put nuts / seeds on ungreased sheet pan. Toast nuts to a light golden brown, about 5 minutes. Set a timer and pay attention! They will have a light nutty smell when they are getting close.

Grate cheese to any size. If your food processor has a grater attachment, you can grate the cheese in the food processor, before making the pesto.

Juice lemons. Recommend zesting the lemons before juicing, then save the zest for another use. (Pro tip - lemon zest can be frozen.)

Pesto order of operations:

Start with the garlic and the liquids (lemon juice and some olive oil), add a pinch of salt and blend until emulsified. Then add the nuts / seeds and cheese, blend. Scrape down the sides, add a little more olive oil, and blend again. Then add the greens and use the PULSE (if available) to mix. Pulse, pulse, scrape sides, pulse, pulse. Do not over blend. Taste and adjust, maybe adding more olive oil or lemon juice to achieve desired texture and taste.

Bring another pot of water to a boil. Salt water, add pasta and cook pasta until al dente (is still a little firm to the bite).

Taste a cardoon slice, it should be tender and taste like artichokes, and not be bitter. When cooked, drain cardoons, and set aside.

Heat a big skillet. Once it is warm, add olive oil, allow to warm, then add red pepper flakes, heat for a minute to season the olive oil.

Add rapini / rabe and sauté for a minute or two until the color darkens.

Then add cardoons and sauté for another minute.

Drain pasta once it is cooked al dente, save about 1/2 cup of the pasta water.

Next add the pasta to the sautéed rabe and cardoons, then add the pesto and a splash of pasta water, toss well and serve. Enjoy!

