

Lovage Pesto

Pesto comes from the Italian word "pestare" meaning "to pound," and back in the day pesto was made with a mortar and pestle. Pesto can be made from any combo of herbs + garlic + nuts + oil + dry aged cheese (optional). This variation uses lovage, an herb that tastes like celery and parsley, with walnuts.

Lovage is a perennial herb that grows happily in the Pacific Northwest. Once it is established it will be one of the first plants producing and it will go all season long, potentially growing to six feet tall! This is the pesto we make in the spring and early summer before our basil plants are in full swing.

Lovage pesto is delicious on pasta, as a dip, a schmear, in place of sauce on pizza, and in salad dressings. Enjoy! - Beth Gates

INGREDIENTS

2 cups (packed) fresh lovage leaves
2-3 cloves garlic (depends on clove size and your preference), paper peeled off
1/3 cup walnuts
1/2 cup olive oil
1/3 cup parmesan cheese, grated (optional)
lemon juice, start with juice from half a lemon, possibly more, to taste
kosher salt, to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Place the garlic and a few tablespoons of oil in a food processor and mince well.
2. Add the nuts and another tablespoon of olive oil and continue to blend until the nuts and garlic are ground into a coarse paste.
3. Add the grated parmesan and another tablespoon of olive oil and continue to blend until you have a smooth paste.
4. Add in the lovage leaves and drizzle in the rest of the olive oil and lemon juice. Blend until you have a smooth paste. Season to taste with kosher salt. Transfer to a bowl and dig in!

