



### **Chef Knittel's Healthy Light Basil Pesto**

*For a vibrant color; add an ice cube to the food processor*

- 1/2-pound basil leaves
- 1 cup parsley leaves
- Small pinch of crushed red pepper flakes
- Salt and pepper to one's own preference
- 2 cups olive oil, divided
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese, optional

Place basil leaves, parsley leaves, crushed red pepper flakes, salt, ground black pepper, 1 cup olive oil, and grated cheese if desired into a food processor or blender. Turn on high and process until it becomes a paste, add more olive oil to make a smoother pesto. Note: Chef Knittel prefers a smooth pesto so he uses the additional oil. He also doesn't include cheese in his pesto but if desired, add about 1/4 cup.

Refrigerate or use right away! Add an ice cube to the processed pesto to hold the vibrant color

**Helpful Hints from Chef Knittel:**

1. An ice cube can be added to the food processor to keep the herbs green; they tend to turn brown when they get hot.
2. You can store the pesto covered in the refrigerator or cooler. The solids will settle to the bottom eventually and the oil will rise to the top.

**Recipes by:** Chef Vinnie Knittel, Chef de Cuisine from Formento's located in Chicago, Illinois

**Cook's Note:** The recipe uses a generous amount of olive oil so add only the amount needed for the pesto consistency that you prefer. I made half of the recipe and used it to flavor mini cheese balls, tomatoes, and drizzled some in our salmon chowder. It was also a great dipping sauce for pieces of rustic bread.

I like to freeze some of the pesto I make to use later in the winter months, I find that it is easier to fill ice cube trays, putting the pesto in decorating or plastic bags with a clipped corner. After freezing the pesto cubes, I store them in a larger plastic bag. I also saw a 1 and 2 Tablespoon freezer trays at our local cooking store that would freezing pesto even easier.

**About the Recipe:** Combining basil with some parsley leaves lightens and heightens the basil flavor. This recipe doesn't use chopped nuts so it's a perfect way to add pure herb flavor easily to soups, casseroles, or main dishes. Since it doesn't use nuts and can even be made without the grated cheese, it is a recipe that can be used if someone in your family has allergies.



