



Italian Pesto Stuffed Tomatoes

Recipe inspired by Chef Rikku O'Donnchu and Lay's Potato Chips

Pesto Mashed Potatoes

12 ounces Yukon gold potatoes, peeled, cut into medium chunks (3 potatoes)

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/3 cup prepared basil pesto

Place potatoes and salt in a medium saucepan; cover with cold water. Bring to a boil over high heat. Then reduce heat to medium; cook for 15 to 20 minutes until they can be easily pierced with a fork. Drain.

Return potatoes to the saucepan; stir in the prepared basil pesto (about 1/3 cup); then mash the potatoes and pesto together. Season again to taste.

Fresh Basil Pesto:

1 cup fresh basil leaves

1 garlic clove, minced

2 Tablespoons olive oil, divided

2 Tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

2 Tablespoons chopped walnuts

1/4 teaspoon lemon juice, optional

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper

Tip: For a bright green color, blanch the basil leaves.

Prepare a bowl of ice water and a medium pot of boiling water. Put the basil in a sieve; plunge it into the boiling water. Push the leaves down into the water and stir them. Blanch for 15 seconds; remove the basil leaves; then plunge leaves into the ice water to stop the cooking. Drain immediately. Squeeze the water out with paper towels to remove excess water.

Basil Pesto:

Place basil, garlic, and 1 Tablespoon oil in small food processor. Process until all ingredients are combined and basil is fine chopped. Add 1 Tablespoon olive oil, Parmesan cheese, walnuts, and lemon juice. Season with salt and ground black pepper to taste. Set aside.

Stuffing Tomatoes:

3 fresh medium-large tomatoes (make sure they have thick skins)
1-1/2 cups Lay's potato chips (1/2 cup crushed)
1 Tablespoon grated Parmesan cheese
Large and small basil leaves as desired for plating

1. Prepare a bowl of ice water and a large pot of boiling water. Cut an X shape on bottom of each tomato.
2. Place tomatoes into rapidly boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds. Turn each tomato so all sides are blanched using a slotted spoon.
3. Plunge into ice water 30 to 60 seconds to stop the cooking. The peels will loosen.
4. With a small knife, peel tomato skin from the bottom, but do not pull off the top. Use knife to loosen any stubborn spots; work slowly so you don't cut the tomato flesh.
5. Cut off the tomato top with the skins; set aside. Remove the tomato core and as many seeds as you can, leaving a hollow skinless tomato bottom. Using a sharp knife, melon baller or grapefruit spoon makes this a little easier to do.
6. Fill the tomatoes with the prepared pesto potato filling; carefully dip the top of the filled tomatoes into crushed potato chips to coat the filling. Sprinkle with grated Parmesan cheese. Place filled tomatoes in baking pan.
7. Replace the tomato tops, bringing the tomato skins to the top of the tomato. Place in baking dish. With oven rack placed on lower third of oven, preheat broiler.
8. Broil tomatoes in oven for about 10 to 14 minutes or tomato skin tops begin to brown. Remove from oven. Let cool until can be handled. Arrange tomato skins pulled together in the center of the tomato top.
9. Arrange fresh basil leaves in center of each serving plate; place 1 tomato in center of basil leaves. Garnish the top with one or two small basil leaves. Serve immediately. Yield: 3 Italian Pesto Stuffed Tomatoes

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About the Recipe: These Italian flavored stuffed tomatoes are elegant and perfect to serve at a dinner party. Everyone will love the fresh pesto flavored potato filling with that touch of crisp tomato top. With their twirled caramelized tomato skin, they are so impressive as a side dish or even a vegetarian entrée.

About the Chef:

Rikku O'Donnchu grew up in Nottinghamshire, England. He got his start working at Nottingham's exemplary Hart's Hotel and Kitchen where he was introduced to high-end, contemporary cuisine. O'Donnchü moved to Cape Town, South Africa and opened GÅTE on the Quoin Rock wine estate where he changed the face of molecular and theatrical dining in South Africa, winning numerous culinary awards.

O'Donnchu worked his way through the Michelin-awarded kitchens of Europe and found himself working for the 'Godfather of Modern Cookery, Marco Pierre White, in 2007 and staged at The French Laundry and The Fat Duck. These experiences locked in his culinary destiny and helped him realize that cooking isn't just about making a beautiful plate, rather, food can be whimsical and full of hidden messages.

Currently, Ó'Donnchü, is the executive chef of Doshi, the contemporary Korean restaurant that opened July 27 in the Whole Foods Plaza in Winter Park. For More Information See: *Flavors Unknown – Innovative Recipes from our Guest Chefs*
