

More “NEW Slants” on summer FAV’s

Fresh SPINACH PESTO, Chix on Stix with Peanut Sauce, Crazy Kicked UP Deviled Eggs & Spicy & Non-Spicy Sliders

Fresh Spinach PESTO

Pesto is one of my favorite dishes to make. I love everything about it—its versatility, its ease, not to mention its taste. I am constantly thinking of ingredients that I can grind up into a paste for pasta and last week spinach came to mind. I had some organic baby spinach left over that was not enough for salad and I did not want to throw it out. So how would spinach taste as a pesto base I wondered?

Delicious was the answer. Seriously, this might be the best pesto I have ever made. It was light, lemony, flavorful, and best of all AMAZING on a serving of mixed veggies; I really could not believe how good it was.

NOTE: I do not really have an exact ratio for pesto; I just keep adding ingredients to it until I have arrived at the taste and consistency that I like. However, I did cobble together a kind of recipe for you below. Feel free to modify and tweak it to your tastes.

Recent charter guests loved the spinach pesto so much when I first made it with penne pasta, grilled chicken and chopped roasted red peppers, that we served it as a side a every meal and the kids loved it on veggies, pizzas/flatbreads and fish.

In fact, THEY are the ones who INSISTED I post it! ha-ha

NOTE: The first time that I made this pesto I served it with a new Barilla product that I received samples of. It is called **Piccolini Rich in Fiber** and though it is a white pasta, it has 6 grams of dietary fiber per serving! Anyway, I used the mini penne but it comes in mini shells and mini rotini too. Look for it in your markets. Anyway, here is my pesto recipe to get you started.

Spinach Pesto

1 cup baby organic spinach, uncooked **NOTE:** Also try using Baby Arugula
1 garlic clove
1/2 cup finely grated Parmigianino
1/2 walnuts
1/4 cup olive oil
Juice of one lemon
Salt and pepper to taste

Grind all of the ingredients in a food processor, adding more of each until (YOUR) desired taste and consistency is achieved. Coat pasta/veg/fish/chicken/steak/pizza with desired amount and serve.

Chix on Stix with Peanut Sauce:

NOTE: Actually, this is just great as it but just the addition of a little allspice brightens it up a lot.

- 1 cup chunky peanut butter
- 1/2 cup low-sodium chicken stock
- 1 lime, juiced
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon red chili flakes
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 2 tablespoons fresh ground Sea Salt and 2-3 grinds freshly ground black pepper
- 2 pounds chicken tenders **NOTE:** I slightly flatten them with a meat pounder or small fry pan.
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1-teaspoon allspice

Combine peanut butter, stock, lime juice, soy sauce, fish sauce, hot chili flakes, cayenne pepper and honey in a small saucepan. Stir to combine and bring to a simmer over medium heat, stirring occasionally. When peanut butter has melted, season, to taste, with salt and pepper and remove from heat. Preheat grill or use stove top grill pan

In a small bowl mix fresh ground sea salt, fresh ground pepper and the allspice and blend together. Skewer chicken tenders on bamboo skewers, brush both sides with oil and sprinkle with salt/allspice mixture. Grill chicken until it is browned on both sides and cooked through, about 4 minutes per side. Serve with peanut sauce. YUMMO! Makes about: 4 servings.

Crazy Kicked UP Deviled Eggs

- 6 eggs
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 lemon, zested
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped pickled jalapenos
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup chopped french-fried onions
- Smoked paprika, for garnish

Put the eggs in a pot and cover with water by 1 inch and bring to a boil over medium heat. Turn off the heat, cover and let sit in the hot water for 15 minutes. Immediately, drain and rinse under cold water. Peel the eggs, slice in half lengthwise and remove yolks to a bowl.

Add the mayonnaise, mustard, lemon zest and pickled jalapenos to the yolks, using a fork to mash together and incorporate. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Scoop the filling into the egg white pockets of each egg and sprinkle with onions and smoked paprika. Arrange on a serving platter and serve

Spicy Sliders

2 habanero chili peppers (Optional)
1 jalapeno pepper
1 roasted red bell pepper, chopped fine
Olive oil
1/2 pound ground bulk pork Italian sausage, hot or sweet (ground pork can be substituted)
1/2 pound ground beef
10-15 bocconcini balls (mini mozzarella balls) or fresh mozzarella, diced into small cube
Salt and fresh black pepper, to taste
1/4 cup Sriracha
1/4 cup honey
1/2 cup ketchup
Small brioche rolls

Pre-heat grill or grill pan. De-stem jalapenos and habanero peppers, cut in half and reserve other half for another use. Create a pouch out of aluminum foil (if cooking inside, use a foiled lined baking tray and roast in oven preheated to 350 degrees). Put cut pepper inside, drizzle with olive oil. Place on grill until skin is charred and pepper is thoroughly roasted. Remove pepper. Let cool. Then chop until fine, including seeds. Combine chopped red pepper as well.

In a bowl, combine ground meats. Mix in salt, black pepper, and chopped roasted pepper. Using your hands, make 10 small patties. With your fingers, push a couple of bocconcini balls into the center of the patties (you don't want them too close to the edge, as they will melt).

In a small bowl combine Sriracha, ketchup and honey. Mix well and set aside.

Place patties on hot grill. Baste the top with Sriracha-ketchup-honey mixture. After approximately 2-3 minutes, flip burger and baste again. Cook to desired temperature. When burgers are nearly finished, toast buns on grill. Remove buns from grill and place on serving platter, and then place a slider onto the bottom buns. Cover slider with top bun and serve. Makes approximately 10 sliders.

NON-Spicy Sliders:

1 red pepper
1/2 bunch basil – chiffonade
Olive oil
1/2 pound ground pork
1/2 pound ground beef
10-15 bocconcini balls (or fresh mozzarella, diced into small cubes)
Salt and fresh black pepper, to taste
1/4 cup red wine
1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon red pepper flake (Optional)
Small brioche rolls
Ketchup

Pre-heat grill or grill pan. Create a pouch out of aluminum foil (if cooking inside, use a foiled lined baking tray and roast in oven preheated to 350 degrees). Put red pepper inside, drizzle with olive oil. Place on grill until skin is charred and pepper is thoroughly roasted. Remove pepper. Let cool. De-stem, de-seed and dice.

In a bowl, combine ground meats. Mix in salt, black pepper. Using your hands, make 10 small patties. With your fingers, push a couple of bocconcini balls into the center of the patties (you don't want them too close to the edge, as they will melt). Top with a spoon of chopped roasted pepper and approximately 1 1/2 tablespoons of basil — approximately 2 pinches.

Place patties on hot grill. After approximately 2-3 minutes, flip burgers. Cook to desired temperature. Combine wine, vinegar, red pepper flake and fresh black pepper to taste - baste burgers on both sides. When burgers are nearly finished, toast buns on grill. Remove buns from grill and place on serving platter, and then place a slider onto the bottom buns. Cover slider with top bun and serve. Makes approximately 10 sliders.