



# Pesto Pasta with Roasted Chicken and Mushrooms

This recipe is a staple in our house all year round. We especially enjoy it in the summer as we make our pesto fresh from the basil, garlic and parsley we grow in our garden. This is a version of my Mother's pesto recipe.



**Serving**  
6



**Prep**  
40 Minutes



**Cook**  
20 Minutes



**Contributer**  
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## Pesto

- 2 cups Fresh basil leaves, washed with stems removed
- 1/3 cup Extra virgin olive oil
- 3 cloves Garlic
- 1/4 cup Italian (flat) parsley
- 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1/2 cup Pine nuts

## Chicken and Mushroom Pasta

- 10 oz Chicken breast, raw
- 8 oz Cremini mushrooms, sliced
- 1 tbsp Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 360g\* Penne Pasta noodle, uncooked
- 12 Fresh basil leaves (for garnish)
- 1 tbsp Parmesan cheese, grated
- Small amount of butter

\*1 serving of uncooked pasta = 60 grams or 2 oz or 1/2 cup, which yields 1 cup cooked pasta.

Source: <https://www.barilla.com/en-ca/help/measuring-pasta#:~:text=Measuring%20Pasta,-Return%20to%20Help&text=When%20you%20cook%20pasta%2C%202,portions%20of%20pasta%20every%20time.>

## DIETITIAN'S MESSAGE

To save time, make large batches of pesto in advance by doubling the recipe. Place in a container that you can store in the freezer for later use. You can enjoy the taste of summer freshness over the winter season and all throughout the year by planning and preparing in advance.

**Tip:** You can use an air-fryer or BBQ to grill the chicken breast.

1. Preheat oven to 400° F. In the meantime, prepare the pesto.
  2. Using a food processor, chop the garlic first. Then add all other ingredients, except the grated cheese. Allow all ingredients to blend into a smooth paste. Then add the cheese and blend again. Scoop pesto from food processor and place in a medium bowl. Set aside.
  3. Bake the chicken – Once oven has reached its temperature, place chicken breasts on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Sprinkle salt & pepper on each breast (optional). Bake for approximately 10-15 minutes, flipping the breasts until golden brown. Remove from oven and allow to cool. Once cooled, use a fork to shred each chicken breast. Set aside.
  4. Boil the pasta – Cook pasta according to package directions. While waiting for the water to boil to cook the pasta, prepare the mushrooms (Step 4).
  5. Cook the mushrooms–In a pan, add a small amount of olive oil and butter and heat using medium heat. Then add the sliced mushrooms, sprinkle with salt, and cover. This will allow the natural juices of the mushrooms to come out. You can add a little water if the pan becomes dry, then cover again. Before the mushrooms are cooked, pour any liquid from the mushrooms into the bowl of pesto and stir to liquefy.
- N.B.** If the pesto looks dry or is very thick after adding the mushroom juice, you can add a small amount (1/4 to 1/3 cup) of starch water from the pot where the pasta is being cooked. For example, use a cup to scoop some water from the pot when the pasta is almost cooked.
6. Put it all together – Once the pasta is cooked al dente, drain the liquid and return the pasta to the pot. Add the pesto, shredded chicken and mushrooms, and mix thoroughly until all ingredients are blended and pasta is coated. Garnish with fresh basil leaves and top with parmesan cheese.

## Variation

Substitute curly parsley for Italian (flat) parsley and double the amount. Pine nuts are very expensive! Pesto can be made using cashews, walnuts or almonds instead. I personally prefer cashews as they provide a creamy and smooth texture.

You can make this a vegetarian meal by eliminating the chicken.



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