

Orecchiette w/ Pesto-Cream Sauce

Swick

Serves 1 | Active Time: 45 minutes | Total Time: 45 minutes

Chef's Notes

You can also use a food processor to make pesto, but you may not get the same nice texture. This pesto is at its peak when fresh. Use the pesto as soon as possible, or cover it with a thin layer of olive oil and store in a sealed container for a few days in the refrigerator. You can freeze it, but it may lose some of its flavor and color.

Making the Pesto

To begin the pesto, grate each cheese and toss to combine. Using a mezzaluna knife (or a chefs knife or food processor), begin by chopping the garlic.

Add the basil in three portions, making sure to incorporate each amount before adding the next. Do the same with the pine nuts, incorporating them in two batches. Once the mixture is finely chopped, gather everything together and incorporate the cheese in two batches, finely chopping everything together. Transfer to a bowl and add the olive oil. Add enough oil until you reach the consistency you like.

Lastly, taste the pesto for seasoning. You may not have to add any salt. It will depend on how salty the cheese is.

Step 1: Making the Pesto

- 1/3 cup pecorino cheese
- 2/3 cup Parmigiano-Reggiano
- 1 large garlic clove
- 1 cup packed, fresh basil leaves
(approx. 2 bunches)
- 1/4 cup pine nuts
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- kosher salt (to taste)

Making the Cream Sauce and Pasta

To start, bring a large pot of cold, salted water to a boil. In a large sauté pan, add the heavy cream and simmer over medium-high heat. Once the cream reduces by a about one third, begin cooking the pasta. The timing is important, because you want the pasta and the sauce to be ready at the same time. If the cream has reduced enough and the pasta is not quite finished, just set it aside.

Test the pasta and when it is about a minute or two from being done, put the cream back over medium heat. Add the pesto to the cream and stir to combine. Don't let the sauce come to a rapid boil, or it may split and become greasy.

Just before draining the pasta, hold back one cup of the water. This will be used to help thin out the sauce, if necessary. Add the pasta to the sauce and fold everything together. If it is a bit too thick, loosen the sauce with some of the pasta water.

Check for seasoning and transfer to a serving dish. Top with grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, followed by a drizzle of quality, extra-virgin olive oil and a chiffonade of basil. Serve immediately.

Step 2: Making the Cream Sauce and Pasta

- 2 cups heavy cream
- 8 oz orecchiette pasta
- 4 to 5 tbsp pesto
- kosher salt (to taste)
- freshly ground black pepper (to taste)
- grated Parmigiano-Reggiano (for garnish)
- extra-virgin olive oil (for garnish)
- fresh basil (for garnish)