

Pesto

2 cups packed fresh basil, parsley, or coarsely chopped spinach
¾ cup grated Parmesan cheese
½ cup walnut pieces
2 large cloves garlic, cut in half
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
⅔ cup olive oil

Remove stems from basil. Wash leaves thoroughly in lukewarm water, and drain well. Position knife blade in food processor bowl; add basil and next 5 ingredients, and top with cover. Process until smooth. With processor running, pour oil through food chute in a slow, steady stream until combined.

Use immediately or place in an airtight container; refrigerate up to 1 week, or freeze up to 6 months.

Yields: 1¾ cups.

Carol's note: The best time to harvest herbs is in the early morning. Shelled pumpkin seeds may be substituted for walnuts. For added convenience, freeze pesto in ice trays until solid and transfer to freezer container or bag, thus making it easy to remove just the right amount for pasta, soups, etc.

From The Southern Living Cookbook, submitted by Carol Williamson