

# Recipes Using Fresh Basil

## **Pesto**

3 cups fresh basil leaves, tightly packed  
2 large cloves of garlic, roughly chopped  
3 tablespoons pine nuts, toasted and cooled  
1/2 cup good quality olive oil  
1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, grated

Use a salad spinner to wash and dry basil. Remove tough stems. Place in a food processor with garlic and pine nuts. Blend until well processed. With the motor running, add olive oil. Stir in cheese. Add kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste.

Toss pesto with freshly cooked pasta, spread on charred bread for an appetizer or add to garden vegetable soup.

You can vary the ingredients and amounts. Eliminate the pine nuts or substitute walnuts or almonds. Parsley, mint and spinach also make good pesto alone or in combination. Freeze pesto to enjoy fresh summer flavors during the winter months.

**Caprese Salad** – Make this easy and colorful salad when tomatoes are in season.

Layer sliced, fresh tomatoes and whole basil leaves with thin slices of mozzarella. Make a simple vinaigrette by whisking together extra virgin olive oil and balsamic vinegar, salt and pepper to taste. Drizzle over all. Serve at room temperature.

## **Basil Lemonade**

Make basil sugar syrup: Bring 1 cup sugar and 1 cup water to the boil in a medium saucepan, stirring until sugar dissolves. Remove from heat. Add a generous handful of basil stems and leaves. Steep for half an hour. Remove basil. Use to sweeten lemonade. Use fresh basil leaves for garnish. Store leftover basil syrup in the refrigerator.

## **Vinegar Basil**

Add basil leaves and stems to bottles of good quality vinegar or olive oil. Steep for 2 weeks before using on salads. Red and purple basils add great color to both vinegars and oils.