

Pumpkin Seed Pesto with Cilantro and Chipotle

Start to finish: 10 minutes

Makes about 1 cup

This spicy, smoky, earthy Mexican-inspired pesto comes from Milk Street Facebook Community member Carol McClendon of Houston. Toss it with a pound of cooked pasta, along with a little reserved pasta cooking water to help the pesto coat the noodles, but it's also delicious in a quesadilla. Or try it as a finishing touch on roasted winter squash or spooned onto grilled chicken or pork chops.

Don't overprocess the pesto or the pumpkin seeds will absorb all of the oil and the mixture takes on the consistency of a nut butter. To avoid overblending, it's best to add the oil all at once and pulse to combine rather than stream it in while the machine is running.

—Adapted by Rose Hattabaugh

½ cup pumpkin seeds
2 cups lightly packed fresh cilantro
1 ounce cotija cheese, crumbled (¼ cup)
1 chipotle chili in adobo sauce
1 teaspoon grated lime zest, plus 2 tablespoons lime juice
1 medium garlic clove, smashed and peeled
Kosher salt and ground black pepper
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

In a food processor, combine the pumpkin seeds, cilantro, cotija, chipotle chili, lime zest and juice, garlic and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Pulse until roughly chopped, 5 to 10 pulses, scraping the bowl as needed. Add the oil and pulse until incorporated, 5 to 10 pulses. Transfer to a small bowl, then taste and season with salt and pepper.