

Pesto of the Month - March:

PEA SHOOT PESTO (Vegan and Traditional Style)

Spring is around the corner, so says Punxsutawney Phil (the groundhog), who emerged from his den and thankfully did not see his shadow.

March's "PESTO of the Month" kick starts spring with the sweet and tender organic Pea Shoots I recently found at Two Guys from Woodbridge's stall at the Union Square Greenmarket. Pea Shoots, the leaves and tendrils from the pea plant, are harvested within 2 to 4 weeks after germination, while the traditional pea plant grows all summer long to produce pea pods. These baby shoots have a sweet pea and grassy taste, perfect for March!

As we kick off this monthly event with the Union Square Greenmarket and, on my [new Blog](#) as well, I will share recipes for two versions of Pesto each month (Vegan, and a more traditional one using cheese and nuts). Follow along for a variety of ideas covering different proteins and diets. What you will find is Pesto serves as the ultimate Mother Sauce, a building block for many delicious recipes and meals. In fact, too many to count! This month's shared recipes are simple to prepare and packed with so much flavor, thanks to March's simple sauce – **PEA SHOOT PESTO!**

PEA SHOOT PESTO

Recipe by LESLIE LENNOX,
AUTHOR OF PESTO: THE MODERN MOTHER SAUCE

I think you will agree this fantastic flavor of pesto is light, bright and lemony, perfect for spring. Omit the cheese for a vegan version.

2 cups Pea Shoots (*Two Guys from Woodbridge, Hamden, CT.*)
1/4 cup Green Peas (fresh or frozen)
1/4 cup Grated Parmigiano Reggiano (**OPTIONAL**, Do not use in Vegan Version)
1/6 cup Dry Toasted Almonds (whole, sliced or slivered)
1 1/2 Cloves Garlic
1/4 Lemon, Zest & Juice
1/8 teaspoon Kosher Salt
1/8 teaspoon Freshly Ground Black Pepper
1/4 cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO)

Instructions:

- Wash and dry the Pea Shoots
- Defrost Green Peas, if frozen
- Combine all the ingredients except the EVOO in a food processor. Pulse for several seconds, until the mixture turns to a paste. Slowly add the EVOO through the feed tube while pulsing, then pulse for about 10 seconds. Scrape down the sides and pulse once or twice more. If you prefer a smoother, looser consistency, add a little more olive oil and continue pulsing.
- When the pesto is to your liking, use immediately or transfer it to a jar, top with a thin layer of EVOO, cover, and refrigerate until ready to use

PEA SHOOT PESTO VINAIGRETTE

*Recipe by LESLIE LENNOX,
AUTHOR OF PESTO: THE MODERN MOTHER SAUCE*

1/4 cup PEA SHOOT PESTO
Juice of 1/4 Lemon
1/4 cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil
1/4 cup White Wine Vinegar
Salt and Pepper, to taste

Instructions:

Combine all the ingredients in a lidded jar. Shake well. Serve immediately or store in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. You can also place everything into a food processor or, blender and combine.

Roasted Root Veggies over Creamy Polenta topped with Vegan Pea Shoot Pesto

Recipe by LESLIE LENNOX,
AUTHOR OF PESTO: THE MODERN MOTHER SAUCE

Roasted Vegetables:

4 cups diced Root Veggies (Carrots, Parsnips, Potatoes, Beets, Cabbage, Rutabaga from *Phillips Farms, Milford, NJ*)

1/4 cup Maple Syrup or Agave

1/4 cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO)

Salt & Pepper, to taste

Pea Shoot Pesto, to finish (see recipe)

Polenta:

1 cup medium or course Cornmeal (*Oak Grove Mills, Pittstown, NJ*)

4 cups liquid (vegetable broth or water)

Salt, to taste

Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO), to drizzle

Nutritional Yeast, to garnish

Instructions:

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
- Line large baking sheet or roasting pan with foil. Spray with cooking oil.
- Dice cut all the vegetables to the same size. Combine and toss with the Maple Syrup or Agave, EVOO, salt and pepper.
- Spread in a single layer on the baking sheet so that there is no crowding. Roast for 20-30 minutes.
- In a pot, add the Cornmeal to 4 cups of boiling liquid. Stir to prevent lumps. Continue whisking until thickened and smooth. Add salt, reduce to simmer, add EVOO. Remove from the heat. Add Nutritional Yeast (aka Vegan Parmesan) for an added umami flavor, or for a traditional style polenta, add milk or cream, butter and cheese.
- To assemble, add a large ladle of Polenta to your bowl. Top with the roasted root vegetables and an extra large dollop of Pea Shoot Pesto, the “Icing on the Cake!”

Roasted Salmon, topped with Panko Crumbs & Pea Shoot Pesto over Sweet Pea Puree

*Recipe by LESLIE LENNOX,
AUTHOR OF PESTO: THE MODERN MOTHER SAUCE*

Roasted Salmon:

2 – (6 oz.) Salmon Filets
1/4 cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO)
Salt & Pepper, to taste

Panko Breadcrumbs:

1 tab of Butter
1/2 cup Panko Breadcrumbs
2 tablespoons Grated Parmigiano Reggiano
Salt & Pepper, to taste

Pea Shoot Pesto (see recipe)

Instructions:

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
- Line baking sheet or roasting pan with foil. Spray with cooking oil.
- To prepare toasted Panko Breadcrumbs, warm butter in a small saucepan. Add Panko, Grated Cheese, Salt and Pepper. Shake and swirl the pan so that the breadcrumbs do not burn. Remove when golden.
- Place Salmon Filets on the baking sheet. Drizzle EVOO over the top. Sprinkle Salt and Pepper to taste and toasted Panko Breadcrumbs to cover.
- Bake for 12 – 14 minutes until the Salmon is cooked through.
- While Salmon is in the oven, blanch sweet peas for 3 minutes, drain and cool. Add the peas to a small food processor; add lemon juice, salt and 2 tablespoons of water. Pulse until pureed and smooth. Add more water, if necessary. Taste and season, if needed.
- “Paint” your serving plate with the sweet pea puree. Place the Salmon atop the sweet pea puree and spread a heaping spoonful of Pea Shoot Pesto on top. Serve alongside any leftover Roasted Root Vegetables.

Sausage & Farro Stuffed Peppers over Shaved Cauliflower Salad

Recipe by LESLIE LENNOX,
AUTHOR OF PESTO: THE MODERN MOTHER SAUCE

This recipe allows for a lot of versatility: swap sausage, grains or the flavor of Pesto for another. Substitute tomatoes for the peppers, and on and on. By using Farro in place of rice, this dish is now Keto-friendly. Variety is the spice of life after all!

Sausage & Farro Stuffed Peppers:

4 Sausage Links (about 1 lb.)
4 Bell Peppers
1 cup diced Onions, Peppers (save Pepper Tops), and Tomatoes
2 Cloves Garlic, minced
1/4 cup Grated Cheese (Pecorino Romano or Parmigiano Reggiano)
1/4 cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO)
Salt & Pepper, to taste
Sweet Paprika, to taste
1 cup cooked Farro
Pesto, heaping spoonful
Panko Breadcrumbs, to top

Pea Shoot Pesto (see recipe)

Cauliflower Salad:

1 Medium Cauliflower
1/4 cup Panko Breadcrumbs
2 tablespoons Grated Cheese (Pecorino Romano or Parmigiano Reggiano)
Salt & Pepper, to taste

Pea Shoot Pesto Vinaigrette (see recipe)

Instructions:

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- Line baking sheet or roasting pan with foil. Spray with cooking oil.
- Slice the tops off of the Peppers. Save and dice for the sauce. Carefully remove the seeds and membranes inside the peppers. Sprinkle insides with salt and pepper. Set aside.
- Prepare the Farro according to package directions. Pre-cooked or partially cooked Farro is available as well.

- To prepare the sausage, remove the casings. Add to a Medium heated pan with a drizzle of EVOO. Brown the sausage for about 3 minutes. Add diced onions, pepper tops, tomatoes, minced garlic, salt, pepper and sweet paprika. Stir to combine. Break up any sausage chunks. Add the Farro and a large spoonful of Pea Shoot Pesto. Combine and remove from the heat.
- To prepare toasted Panko Breadcrumbs, warm butter in a small saucepan. Add Panko, Grated Cheese, Salt and Pepper. Shake and swirl the pan so that the breadcrumbs do not burn. Remove when golden.
- Stuff the Peppers with the Sausage Mixture, topped with Grated Cheese. Cook in the oven for 20 minutes. For an additional 5 minutes, sprinkle the Panko Breadcrumbs over the tops and return to oven. When done, remove from the oven and top with a heaping spoonful of Pesto.
- To create the Cauliflower Salad: Cut the whole head into quarters. Using a mandolin, shave the raw cauliflower into thin ribbons. Combine with the Pea Shoot Pesto Vinaigrette. Toss and place on a serving plate. Garnish with the Panko Breadcrumbs and Grated Cheese. Top with the Stuffed Peppers. Serve.