

PASTA WITH PESTO, POTATOES, AND GREEN BEANS

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WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:

The idea of serving two starches together might seem unusual, but this dish from Liguria is the classic way to serve pesto. The starch from the potatoes lends body to the sauce, and the tender green beans add color and flavor. Red potatoes make the creamiest sauce. Some traditional recipes call for cooking the potatoes, green beans, and pasta simultaneously in the same pot, but it often results in one or more elements being overcooked. Cooking them separately makes the dish more foolproof.

SERVES 6

If gemelli is unavailable, penne or rigatoni make good substitutes. Use large red potatoes measuring 3 inches or more in diameter.

INGREDIENTS

- 1/4** cup pine nuts
- 3** garlic cloves, unpeeled
- 1** pound large red potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- Salt and pepper
- 12** ounces green beans, trimmed and cut into 1 1/2-inch lengths
- 2** cups fresh basil leaves
- 1** ounce **Parmesan cheese**, grated (1/2 cup)
- 7** tablespoons **extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1** pound gemelli
- 2** tablespoons **unsalted butter**, cut into 1/2-inch pieces and chilled
- 1** tablespoon lemon juice

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1.** Toast pine nuts and garlic in 10-inch skillet over medium heat, stirring frequently, until pine nuts are golden and fragrant and garlic darkens slightly, 3 to 5 minutes. Transfer to bowl and let cool. Peel garlic and chop coarsely.
 - 2.** Bring 3 quarts water to boil in large pot. Add potatoes and 1 tablespoon salt and cook until potatoes are tender but still hold their shape, 9 to 12 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer potatoes to rimmed baking sheet. (Do not discard water.)
 - 3.** Meanwhile, bring 1/2 cup water and 1/4 teaspoon salt to boil in now-empty skillet over medium heat. Add green beans, cover, and cook until tender, 5 to 8 minutes. Drain green beans and transfer to sheet with potatoes.
 - 4.** Process basil, Parmesan, oil, pine nuts, garlic, and 1/2 teaspoon salt in food processor until smooth, about 1 minute.
 - 5.** Add gemelli to water in large pot and cook, stirring often, until al dente. Set colander in large bowl. Drain gemelli in colander, reserving cooking water in bowl. Return gemelli to pot. Add butter, lemon juice, potatoes and green beans, pesto, 1/4 cups reserved cooking water, and 1/2 teaspoon pepper and stir vigorously with rubber spatula until sauce takes on creamy appearance. Add additional cooking water as needed to adjust consistency and season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately.
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