

# GNOCCHI W/A ZESTY-SPINACH PESTO SAUCE! (VEGAN)

Serves: 2

Yields: about 350ml pesto.

Prep & Cooking Time: 30-40 mins

Type: Main Meal

Tools: Chopping board, sharp knife, manual juicer, food processor, silicone spatula, resealable container, non-stick pot, colander, mixing bowl

Courtesy of: Eat2Health Blog



*This is a simple, stodgy and satisfying Italian-inspired meal! This pesto sauce is refreshing, creamy, nutritious and the perfect accompaniment for your gnocchi; you can even make it the night before if you are short on time! Buona cena!*

## Ingredients

65g	Baby Spinach Leaves		Salt & Ground Black Pepper
60g	Fresh Basil	40g	Pine Nuts
12g	Garlic Clove	160ml	Water
1	Lemon (zest & juice)	200g	Plain Soya Yoghurt (unsweetened & fortified)
80ml	Extra Virgin Olive Oil	200g	Gnocchi (Vegan; GF if preferred)

## Directions

1. Wash and dry the spinach and basil. Peel the garlic. Wash the lemon, grate some zest and then juice it. **Tip:** We used all of the zest and juice from the lemon, but feel free to use less (or more!) if preferred.
2. Prepare the pesto. Place 40ml olive oil into a food processor. Add the lemon zest and juice (as much as desired). Blend until blitzed! Whilst the food processor is still running, add the garlic. Blend until the garlic is minced. Add the nuts and 160ml cold water.

Blend until smooth and creamy. Scrape the mixture off the sides into the bottom using a silicone spatula. Season it with some salt and pepper to taste. Add the spinach and basil. **Tip:** Use the basil leaves and stems! We gently ripped some of the basil prior to adding it to the food processor. Blend until creamy NB: there will still be a few bits present. Add the remaining 40ml oil and an **additional 2 tbsp of water**. Blend until combined. **Tip:** Add more water if a thinner pesto is preferred. Taste and season as you go. Transfer the pesto into a resealable container (as you won't be using all of it today!

3. Decision time! You can simply just prepare the sauce and the gnocchi ...or organise a few extra veggies to add to this meal! We'll assume that you are preparing some extra veggies! NB: The veggies that we chose to use included: 160g Frozen green beans, 80g Chestnut mushrooms, 20g Sun-dried tomatoes, 40g Shallot, 10-20g Spinach leaves!

4. Place a large saucepan full of cold water over a medium-high heat. Bring to the boil. *Tip: Our pot of water took about 10 mins to boil! It was just enough time to prep your veggies!* Add the gnocchi. Cook according to the packet instructions (ours took 3 mins). *Tip: Once gnocchi starts to rise to the surface of the pot, they're done!* Drain.
5. In the meantime, prepare any veggies you plan on using! We gently fried some shallot and chestnut mushrooms, steamed some green beans, drained and diced some sun-dried tomatoes and shredded some baby spinach.
6. Assemble the pesto sauce. Place 200g yoghurt into a large measuring jug. Add about 100g of the pesto. Mix until combined.
7. Assemble the dish. Place the cooked gnocchi into a large mixing bowl. NB: We added some spinach at this stage and mixed it through. If you are not adding 'greens', just add the sauce. *Tip: The hot gnocchi will allow the spinach to wilt slightly.* Add the sauce. Mix to coat. If applicable, add any other prepared veggies. Mix together. Taste and season it as necessary.
8. Ladle the gnocchi mixture into a serving bowl. Garnish with some sun-dried tomatoes whatever else takes your fancy! *Tip: For fewer calories (and a pop of colour!), try using some: diced red bell pepper, sweet paprika or some baby plum or cherry tomatoes.*

Enjoy!

## Notes:

- Pesto is a lovely addition to many recipes, but it's naturally high in fat (from the oil, nuts and traditionally added cheeses). It can contain some 'good fats' (mono and polyunsaturated) from the added nuts and/or oil, but unless you are making it with hard cheeses (and being mindful of your overall ingredients), high saturated fat contents start making an appearance. Nonetheless, it is something that can be enjoyed in moderation (just be mindful of your portion sizes)!
- Gnocchi can be a great alternative to pasta and rice (be mindful though, as some brands contain a fair bit of added salt/serving)! ...Which is why you should try making it yourself! We have tried to make it on a few occasions, but the final product still needs some perfecting! With any recipe, it can take practice, patience and perseverance! Luckily potatoes and flour are relatively inexpensive, so you won't break the bank trying!
- If preferred...
  - Try making the pesto with different vegetables, herbs and/or nuts/seed combinations. Try experimenting with: kale, wild rocket, sun-dried tomato, cooked beetroot, roasted aubergine, fresh coriander or parsley or some ground almonds, walnuts or pistachios instead!
  - For a low-fat version, use less pesto/sauce or just drizzle your gnocchi with a little 'herby' oil and a top with a few veggies of choice! Alternatively use a basic (low fat/sugar) tomato-based sauce, 'creamy-broccoli', roasted red pepper, a roasted squash and sage sauce, or a 'cheesy', low-fat and DF white sauce made (with DF milk, nutritional yeast and flavourings of choice)!
- Refrigerate the remaining pesto; consume within 3-5 days. Try using it on pasta, in a lasagne, wrap or sandwich, as a dip with some crudities or run a bit through some steamed vegetables.