

SPICY BASIL EGGPLANT

Yield: 4 servings

1 large purple eggplant or 2 Thai or Japanese eggplants

1 tablespoon oil

2 cloves chopped garlic

2 chile peppers or to taste, sliced

1 cup water

2 tablespoons fish sauce, see note

1 tablespoon granulated sugar

Leaves from 1 bunch Thai basil or sweet basil

Note: Fish sauce, also called nam pla, is available in the Asian section of any well-stocked grocery, usually near the soy sauce.

1. Cut the eggplant into bite-sized pieces.
2. Heat the oil over high or medium-high heat in a wok or large pan. Add the garlic and sliced peppers, and stir until the garlic turns golden brown. Stir in the eggplant and add the water. Cover, and cook until the eggplant is done, about 5 to 7 minutes - you can tell it is cooked if it has turned from white to translucent. If the eggplant is not yet cooked and all the water has been absorbed, add more water and cover until it is done.
3. Add fish sauce and sugar, and stir. Add basil and cook, stirring, just until it wilts. Serve hot with rice.

Per serving: 86 calories; 4 g fat; 1 g saturated fat; no cholesterol; 2 g protein; 13 g carbohydrate; 8 g sugar; 4 g fiber; 713 mg sodium; 25 mg calcium.

Recipe from ThaiTable.com

BASIL MOJITOS

Yield: 2 servings

10 large basil leaves, divided

1/4 cup plus 4 teaspoons granulated sugar, divided

1/4 cup lime juice

1/2 cup white rum

About 1/2 cup club soda

Lime wedges

1. Place 2 basil leaves and 1/4 cup sugar in a food processor and process until well-blended. Transfer to a plate and set aside.
2. Put the remaining 8 basil leaves in a large cocktail shaker with the remaining 4 teaspoons of sugar and lime juice. Muddle the mixture (crush the basil leaves) with the back of a thick wooden spoon.
3. Add rum and several ice cubes to shaker, cover and shake to blend. Rub a lime wedge along the rim of 2 lowball glasses and dip the wet glass rims into the basil sugar mixture. Add a few ice cubes to each glass and divide the rum mixture between the glasses. Top off each with club soda, and stir. Garnish with a lime wedge.

Per serving: 267 calories; no fat; no saturated fat; no cholesterol; no protein; 36 g carbohydrate; 34 g sugar; no fiber; 14 mg sodium; 12 mg calcium.

Recipe by Stephanie Spencer, via Sunset

HIGH THAI PESTO

Yield: about 2 cups

4 cloves garlic, peeled

2 1-inch pieces fresh ginger, peeled

4 serrano peppers, stemmed and seeded (type/heat of pepper up to chef)

¾ cup dry, honey-roasted peanuts

1 ½ cups Thai basil (or a combination of basil)

½ cup fresh mint

½ cup fresh cilantro

zest and juice of 1 lime

1 tablespoon rice wine vinegar

⅔ cup peanut oil

2 tablespoons sesame oil

salt and crushed red pepper to taste

1. Place the garlic, ginger, peppers and peanuts in the food processor. Pulse several times to coarsely chop.
2. Add the basil, mint, cilantro and lime zest. Pulse several more time to combine and chop greens.
3. With processor running, slowly add lime juice, vinegar and oils in a thin stream until smooth consistency. Add salt and red pepper to taste.

BASIC PESTO RECIPE

2 -3 cloves garlic, peeled

1/4 cup nuts or seeds

2 cups basil leaves (or other greens)

1/4 cup aged cheese (if desired)

1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil

salt to taste

1. Place garlic, and nuts or seeds in food processor. Pulse several times to coarsely chop.
2. Place basil and cheese in food processor. Pulse several times to combine and chop greens.
3. With processor running, add oil in a thin stream until desired consistency.

Variations:

Use above measurements unless otherwise stated, only substitutions and additions are listed.

Lemon basil pesto

Pistachios

Lemon basil

Asiago cheese

Chard/cilantro pesto

Pepitos (roasted pumpkin seeds, shelled)

1 serrano (or other) pepper, stemmed and seeded

1 cup Swiss chard, stems removed

1/2 cup cilantro

Juice of 1/2 lime

These proportions result in a pesto that is to my taste. Feel free to experiment with the proportions to find your own favorite pesto!

Recipe from Cindy Shapton

Basil Banana Pepper Jelly

1/2 cup banana peppers, seeded thinly sliced (or any mild, sweet pepper)

1/4 cup hot peppers (mixture of poblano & jalapeno), seeded & diced

1/4 cup finely diced red onion

3 or 4 large fresh basil leaves, cut into thin ribbons

1/4 teaspoon dried basil

3/4 cups white vinegar

3 cups sugar

1 pouch liquid pectin

Combine peppers, red onion and fresh and dried basil in a large, deep stainless steel saucepan. Stir in vinegar and sugar.

Over high heat, bring mixture to a full, roiling boil. Stirring constantly, boil hard 1 minute. Remove from heat. Immediately stir in one pouch Liquid Pectin, mixing well.

Pour jelly into a hot jar, dividing solids equally among jars and filling each jar to within 1/4 inch of top rim (head space). Wipe jar rims. Center lids on jars & screw on bands. Process in BWB 10 minutes.

Cool for about 30 minutes, then, when lids are concave but jelly is still hot, carefully invert & twist jars to distribute solids throughout jelly. (**Do not let them remain upside down for long periods**) Repeat as needed during the cooling/setting time, until solids are evenly suspended in the jelly. Makes 3 1/2 pints.

